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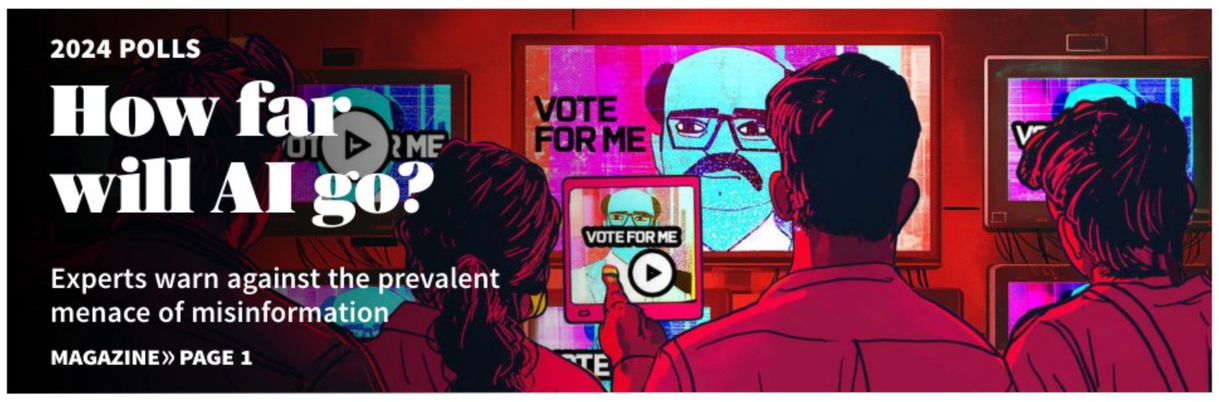
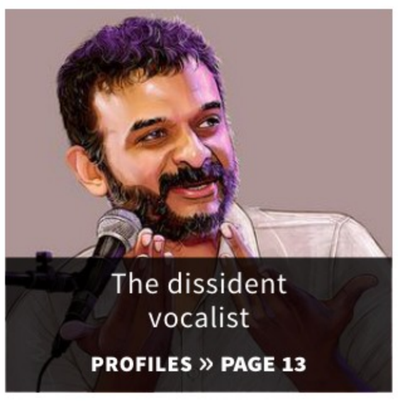


2024 POLLS

How far will AI go?

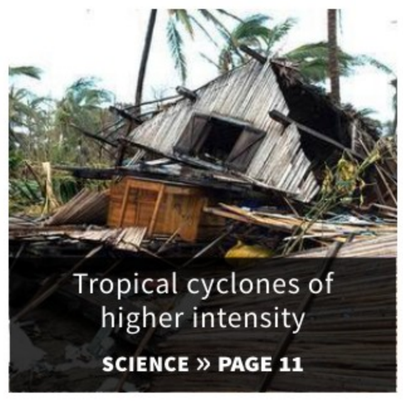
Experts warn against the prevalent menace of misinformation

MAGAZINE» PAGE 1



The dissident vocalist

PROFILES » PAGE 13



Tropical cyclones of higher intensity

SCIENCE » PAGE 11

Mayank Yadav swings it Super Giants' way

SPORT » PAGE 15

NEARBY

Kolar LS seat: Gowtham is Cong. candidate

BENGALURU
The Congress central election committee on Saturday approved the candidature of K.V. Gowtham, president of the Bengaluru Central District Congress Committee, for Kolar reserved (SC) constituency for the Lok Sabha poll. » Page 5

Have received I-T notice: DKS

BENGALURU
Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar on Saturday said he had received an income tax notice though the case against him was a "settled matter".

» Page 5

CLASSIFIEDS » PAGES 2 & 4
MAGAZINE » 8 PAGES

CAA Rules silent on fate of rejected applicants

CAA applicants can be rejected by an empowered committee if their documents fail scrutiny, or if there is any adverse security clearance report; no mention of review procedures in CAA Rules

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

As applications start coming in through the online citizenship portal of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), some potential applicants are worried about their fate if rejected. The law's Rules, notified earlier this month, are silent regarding any review process for applications rejected by the empowered committees which have the final authority to accord citizenship under the Act.

Some potential applicants, including lakhs of people from the Matua community of West Bengal, entered the country decades ago and have been living as Indian citizens for many years. However, if their submitted documents now fail the scrutiny of the empowered committee, or if there is an adverse security clearance report about them, their applications for Indian citizenship under the CAA could be rejected.

"If an application is rejected, people may end up in detention centres," warned Mamata Bala Thakur, a Trinamool Congress parliamentarian who hails from a Hindu community that migrated from Bangladesh.

The parent law, the Citizenship Act, 1955, says that the applicant may file a review application before the Central government within 30 days and "the decision of the Central government on such review shall be final."

Review of rejection

According to Aman Wadud, an Assam-based lawyer who has worked extensively on citizenship cases in the State, "the review of the rejection is to be done by the same authority, the empowered committee (as per Section 15 A of the Act). In case the review is rejected, a writ petition can be filed before the High Court."

The ambiguity around the rejection of applications poses concerns, particularly for the Matua community in West Bengal, who stand to benefit from the CAA's provision of fast-tracked citizenship.

CONTINUED ON
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Hurdles in front

What happens after a citizenship application is uploaded online?

1 A district-level committee headed by the Superintendent of Post will verify the documents

2 The officer will forward the application to an empowered committee

3 The empowered committee on being satisfied with the suitability of the applicant, may grant him the citizenship of India by registration or naturalisation, as the case may be, and issue a certificate

A protest rally held against CAA in Kolkata. AFP

Four receive Bharat Ratna posthumously

Dr. Nitya Rao receives Bharat Ratna from President Droupadi Murmu on behalf of Dr. M.S. Swaminathan on Saturday. ANI

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday conferred the Bharat Ratna on former Prime Ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao and Chaudhary Charan Singh; former Bihar Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur; and agronomist Dr. M.S. Swaminathan. All four awards were presented posthumously at a brief ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The late Rao's award was received by his son, P.V. Prabhakar Rao, while Singh's award was received by his grandson, Jayant Chaudhary. Dr. Swaminathan's daughter, Nitya Rao, received the award for her father, and Thakur's was received by his son, Ram Nath Thakur.

Ms. Murmu is likely to visit Mr. Advani, the other awardee this year, at his residence to honour him as his mobility is restricted because of frail health.

CONTINUED ON
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LS polls are a referendum on secularism, says Pinarayi

G Anand
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has underscored that the upcoming Lok Sabha election is a referendum on "preserving India's secular democracy" and little else. In an e-mail interview with *The Hindu* on Friday, Mr. Vijayan articulated the pivotal nature of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections ahead of the launch of his 24-day tour through Kerala's 20 Lok Sabha constituencies on Saturday.

Mr. Vijayan said it was reductive to depict the Left Democratic Front's (LDF) staunch resistance to the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act as a "question about minority or majority". Instead, the "question is about secularism", he added.

FULL REPORT
» PAGE 6

Chargesheet filed against *NewsClick*

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Saturday filed its first chargesheet against news portal *NewsClick* and its founder Prabir Purkayastha, in a case lodged under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, following allegations that they received funds through Chinese firms to spread pro-China propaganda.

The chargesheet running into thousands of pages was brought in a trunk and filed before the Additional Sessions Judge Hardeep Kaur of the Patiala House Court.

It had named Mr. Purkayastha and PPK NewsClick Studio Private Limited as accused, special public prosecutor Akhand Pratap Singh submitted in the court. The court posted the matter for further hearing on April 16.

Arrests in the case

The chargesheet against *NewsClick* came nearly six months after the Delhi Police arrested Mr. Purkayastha and the human resources head of the news portal Amit Chakraborty, on October 3, 2023. Mr. Chakraborty turned approver in this case in January 2024.

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Bannerghatta Road to be partially closed for a year for metro work

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Commuters may have to face traffic snarls on Bannerghatta Road, Lakkasandra, and surrounding areas as Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (BMRCL) has announced the partial closure of Bannerghatta Road near the Lakkasandra underground station to aid metro construction works for one year.

According to a BMRCL statement released on Saturday, north-bound traffic on Bannerghatta Main Road, from the MICO signal to the Anepalya junction, will be closed for one year starting April 1 to facilitate the construction of the station's south side entry structure.

North-bound traffic on Bannerghatta Main Road, from the MICO signal to the Anepalya junction, will be affected by the road closure. FILE PHOTO

"Traffic moving on Bannerghatta Road towards Anepalya junction will have to take a right turn at the MICO signal to reach the Adugodi signal via the BOSCH link road and then take a left. There is no diversion for the traffic moving towards Dairy Circle from the Anepalya junction. Traffic from Dairy Circle towards Shantinagar is to take a left at the 7th Main Road of Wilson Garden," the release stated.

Work on Pink Line

According to officials, the work is ongoing on the Pink Line underground station. Under Phase 2 of the project, the Reach 6 line is from Kalena Agrahara to Nagavara – 21.26 km with 18 stations. It consists of an elevated section of 7.5 km with six stations from Kalena Agrahara to Tavarekere and an underground section of 13.76 km with 12 stations from Diary Circle to Nagavara.

The line will be operational in 2025, according to the BMRCL.

Invoking 'Kannadiga pride', CM slams HDD

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah hit back at JD(S) supremo and former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda a day after the latter said that the former should suffer "garvabhanga" (broken pride) with a victory of BJP-JD(S) alliance in Mysuru and Chamarajanagar seats.

Giving the political repartee the edge of regional pride, he said: "JD(S) leader H.D. Deve Gowda has vowed to break my pride. But mine is neither pride nor arrogance. This is the innate self-esteem of Kannadigas that rises strong and determined in safeguarding Kannada, its people, and Karnataka. I humbly draw Mr. Gowda's attention to this fact."

Mr. Siddaramaiah went on to say that despite his political differences with Mr. Gowda, he respected his stance on protecting land, water, and language.

"However, in the last 10 years, the BJP government under Narendra Modi has consistently acted against Karnataka's interests, opposing our State flag, imposing Hindi, and being unfair in the Cauvery, Krishna, and Mahadayi water disputes, and deceiving Kannadiga youth in Central institutions.

CONTINUED ON
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Zakaat helps free inmates during Ramzan

Over the past few years, some organisations have a part of their savings during the holy month set aside for charity, to free prisoners who cannot afford bail, thereby helping them and their families

Syed Mohammed
HYDERABAD

It is in the month of Ramzan that most Muslims busy themselves with calculating *zakaat*, a prominent manifestation of charity in Islam. Usually given to those in abject poverty, over the past few years, *zakaat* funds, calculated at 2.5% of an individual's annual savings and eligible assets, are being used to free inmates of jails who have served their prison sentences but have no support systems to pay fines associated with their convictions.

Moin Pasha, an octogenarian, says, "It was two years ago that I got to know of an organisation that uses *zakaat* money to pay those who cannot afford bail. Some of these prisoners are sole breadwinners and everything depends on them," she says.

A noble cause: MPJ secretary Shaik Kasim Sahah with Khammam district jail authorities. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Movement for Peace and Justice (MPJ), a non-profit, is one such organisation that has been gathering *zakaat* from donors and channelling these funds to secure prisoner release. "Since last year we have paid 130 fines that are associated with prison sentences. Additionally, we have paid bail money for 35 prisoners and have got them all released," Ahmed Hameeduddin Shakeel, finance secretary, MPJ, says.

The MPJ, an affiliate of the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, a socio-religious organisation, after due diligence, identifies prisoners who are first-time offenders involved in small crimes, and who have no family or friends to pay bail or fines.

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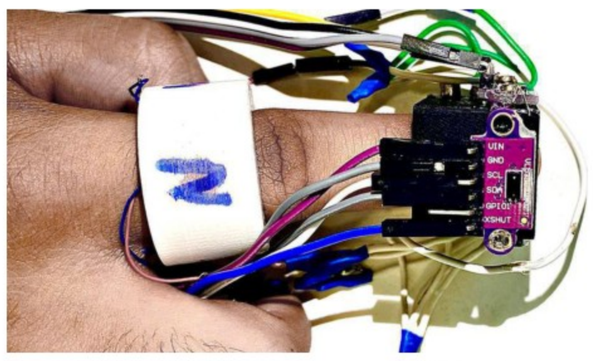
Making classroom experience seamless for visually challenged

Shilpa Elizabeth
BENGALURU

A team of students at International Institute of Information Technology-Bangalore (IIIT-B) have come up with a first-of-its-kind technology that would help vision-impared students get a seamless learning experience in a physical classroom.

The technology that comes with a hardware device to be mounted on the student's finger was granted a patent in the second week of March, and requires a smart board equipped-class room.

"All the student needs to do is place their finger with the device on a flat surface, for example, a desk," explains Mayank Kabra, who worked on the hardware part of the technology.



The device, part of the technology developed by IIIT-B students, consists of six Braille dots, tiny motors to control them, and microcontrollers for directions. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Once connected with the device using WiFi or local networks, the smart board would be virtually mapped to the desk. In other words, the desk would act as the student's board and the device as a mouse of sorts.

If the teacher is explaining a certain concept on the board, say a triangle, the vibrations inside the device will guide the finger movements of the student helping them to trace the shape of a triangle. If the teacher's cursor goes to a certain portion on the screen, the student will be able to follow it in near-real time.

The device is also equipped with Braille dots, allowing the user to understand the text on the smart board.

"The visually impaired person who is wearing the device will get two feedback. One is the haptic feedback. And the other is from the Braille sensor. Together, they ensure that when the professor is writing or drawing on the board, the student also gets the similar sensation," Kabra explains.

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Sacred flame: A boy with a ceremonial lamp at the Kottankulangara Bhagavathy Temple in Kollam, Kerala, on March 24.

Getting ready: Family members help a boy get dressed before going to offer prayers at the temple.

Gracious look: Men attired in sarees and decked in jewellery participate in the rituals and procession.

Embracing the feminine

Chamayavilakku, a festival in Kollam district of Kerala, is a flamboyant display of sartorial creativity where men deck up in women's clothes, complete with jewellery and accessories

Thulasi Kakkat
thulasidas.pv@thehindu.co.in

On the 10th and 11th of the Malayalam month of Meenam (mid-March to mid-April), thousands of men dressed as women throng the Kottankulangara Sri Bhagavathy Temple in Kollam for its annual festival, Chamayavilakku. As per tradition, during the two-day celebration, men line up from the temple gate for the ceremonial *Ezhunnallathu* (procession) around 2 a.m., holding lamps with five wicks to seek the blessings of the presiding deity, goddess Durga.

This gender-bending festival is a flamboyant display of sartorial creativity. Men deck up in women's clothes, complete with jewellery and accessories. Every year, several studios and green rooms mushroom near the temple to help male devotees transform into women.

On both days of the festival, the same rituals are followed. This tradition goes back to the temple's legend, according to which when some cowherds attempted to smash a coconut with a stone and it began to bleed. Astrologers discovered that the stone held Vanadurga's divine force, and they instructed the local people to erect a shrine around it. At the time, girls performed pujas in the temple. The cowherds therefore dressed as girls to perform the temple's initial pujas. Boys below the age of 10 also dress up as girls for Kakkavilakku, a part of the Chamayavilakku festival, but held during the day.

Over the years, Chamayavilakku has acquired a special significance for the transgender community in Kerala, which attends the festival in large numbers.

Final touches: Boys get to wear lipstick and rouge for the ceremony.

Classifieds

thehinduads.com

LIFE MADE SIMPLE

THE HINDU

Matrimonial

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

COSMOPOLITAN

ARYAVYSYA, 28Y, 5ft 5inch, DM Neurology, very beautiful bride seeks suitable groom, Jayasimha Parinaya Vedika, Whatsapp.9000803380

DOCTOR

MD ANESTHESIOLOGY Doctor, 1989 born 165cm fair, beautiful, cultured and homely. Settled in Chennai. Father Doctor Kerala Nair , Mother Tamil CSI. Doctor and Engineer grooms preferred. Ct: 9840050381/ 9840985383

DOCTOR GIRL 30/156 MBBS MD General Medicine, seeks Doctors/ suitable grooms 9447493034, 9497168001

VANNIAR, AFFLUENT Family (Divorce) aged 33 years, Dr. MS (O&G) seeks same profession bridegroom, sub caste no bar. Call : 98941 34981

NAIDU/MBC 24/ 167 Fair,MBBS,Avittam, Makaram,both parents doctors, own hospital seeks M.S/M.D clinical doctor groom from affluent/doctor family TN/Pondy contact :6380069015 / 9790288125.

SC AD, 30 yrs, MBBS, Doctor, working in NHS, UK, Hastham, Kanni seeks groom preferably in UK. 9003017072

INTERCASTE (NAIDU– SC) 30/F doctor divorced no child. Wanted Groom – TN/ 30's/ divorced no child/ Caste no bar. Ph: 9442145470

TAMIL HINDU SC AD 32year Doctor MBBS, DCH, DNB (Pediatrics) working in Pondicherry seeking suitable groom Contact: 9443634719

PARENTS OF Obs & Gynaecologist MBBS MS FMAS (OBG) 32/ 156 Gavara Naidu invite alliance from suitable groom doctors/ business/ EX service CNB 9159150101 / doctorrgm@ Gmail.com

MUDALIAR DR. Subashree Balakrishnan MBBS / Doctor Age 32 Ayilyam/ Kadagam sks Doctor Groom only 9176514141

HINDU NADAR
Chennai, Only Daughter, Fair & Charm Girl, MBBS, MD-Y1, 24/160, Rich Affluent, well-Educated family seeks suitable Good Looking Doctor Groom with clean habits from Hindu Nadar only.
Ct: 94447 59246
94449 68235

KANNADA

WANTED Doctor Groom from Kannada Devanga Chettiyar with PG for a PG NEET doing Bride 165 cm/ 25yrs-fair looking. Ph: 9443729425.

NRI

WANTED GROOM working in USA for a Tamil, Naidu girl, 28 years working in IT USA. Caste no bar. Contact : naturalpath93@gmail.com

TAMIL

ELITE TAMIL Muslim 37 B.E seeks qualified, employed, Never married Tamil Muslim Groom. 9444235779

Govt Doctor M.D 37yrs, never married Fair, seeks RC/ CSI Christian Groom Doctor,Engr 9444808870/ 8072910380

RC 34/ 165 MDS Associate Prof Dental college Chennai seeks PG Drs/ Engr/ IT Caste no bar Cont 9444157888

CHRISTIAN GROOM professionally qualified from well to do family, in India/Abroad , for a well qualified CSI Christian girl age 34 fair,beautiful, from affluent family, working in a reputed international institution Chennai as Senior Manager. Parents Contact. 9840101011.

RC NADAR unmarried Bride, 34/5.7, M.E., SWE seeks BC/FC unmarried Groom. Ct: 98868 88775.

CHRISTIAN NADAR: Girl– 27, MBBS, DCH, Seeks Doctors / or Any Suitable Other Professionals Ok: 93635 70731

NADAR 33/5'6" MBA working in Chennai Elite Family Seeks qualified Groom working in Cennai. CNB 9962991972

VANNIAR FAIR Girl Uthiram 25/166 M.S. (Engg) Australia. Father S.E. (Retd) TNEB Seek Smart handsome groom with M.S (Engg) Ct : 97894 61060

VANNIYAR KULA Kshatriya Hindu Avittam 27/158, B.E seeks Well Settled Groom. Contact: 9840028346

HINDU TAMIL Veg 39/165 MS(UK) Divorcee No issues Entrepreneur , Chennai seeks Veg Groom 38–41yrs well settled affluent family. Ct: 9884816309

GROOM WANTED Elite Mudaliyar, 39yrs, LLM, Well Educated background in Chennai. Ct: 9962791888/ 8939691888

HINDU DEVAR 39Yrs B.Com MBA 1st marriage seeks suitable Groom from FC/BC caste only. CT: 9442001440.

TAMIL

B.Tech (IT) MBA (IIM-C) Tamil/Telugu Chettiar girl 33/170 AGM/MNC seeks suitable Edu Groom CNB 8300665039

HINDU SC/AD 31/160 BE, MS in US, employed in US H1B Visa seeks suitable groom from US/CANADA/UK Ct : 8073030092

HINDU SAMBAVAR Girl fair 35/163cm graduate State government employee 50 Thousand Salary. Seeks Suitable Bridegroom Contact: 7845213551

IYER– VADAMA, Bharadwaja Gothram, 31Y, Fair, 5ft. M.S.(IT), working in MNC (UK), seeking groom in the UK. Ct – 9884024668/ 9080512589

SC ARUNTHATHIYAR Thiruvathirai 9-9-1985 MSc employed 1st Marriage seeks groom. CNB. Ct:9150331377

TAMIL Yadava CNB - A Business family from Ooty wants Groom for their Daughter 25 Years very Fair Bachelor in Fashion Designing Sadayam - Kumbam Business / Family from Yadava/Pillai/Mudaliar.CT:9443115000

HINDU SC AD 28 yrs MBA Chennai Bride seeks same community Chennai qualified employed below 34 yrs Life partner groom. Ct 7338901952 Whatsapp

AGAMUDAIYAR : 26y, Fair, Caste No Bar, MBBS, DCH. Seeks Doctor ok. Any Other Suitable Groom – Chennai / Any Dist : 7824023030

HINDU MARUTHUVAR 30/159cm CA Auditor Fair Legally Divorced Seeks Groom Caste No Bar 8667868854

PILLAI 29/165 BE MBA(IIM) Fair good-looking girl Uthirattathi BIG4 consulting Chennai looking for groom with similar qualifications. Ct: 7358116081, arusubbu508@gmail.com

TAMIL YADAVA – Tirunelveli based – Chennai settled – parents seeks alliance for their Daughter from same native, age 28, Kanni, Chithirai – 3rd patham, B.A.LL.B(HONS), practising at Madras High Court expecting Supportive and Preferably Employed / Professional / Progressive bridegroom. 9884933237

NAIDU, 50YRS, Beautiful, Unmarried, employed seeks suitable Groom. Age/ Caste No Bar. Ct: 7092569171.

HINDU NADAR Nellai 1990 155cm 1st Marriage MCA Chithirai Kanni IT Job, Seeks Well Qualified, Good Job Bride Groom from Same Caste 9943913513

MD(ANAES) 36Y 165cm Chettiar (Caste No Bar) Divorcee, fair, slim. Seeks well–educated settled groom from Chennai–9345049563.

GROOM WANTED Elite Mudaliyar, 25yrs, MA(HRM), Own Textile business in Chennai. Ct: 9710093999/ 9710091999

HINDU VANNIYAR 26/165cm, B.COM, CA, Elite Family, well settled. Seeks Suitable Groom, CNB. Ct: 9047192999

HINDU GROOM with moral values for well to do Mudaliar girl BE/ 28y/ 155cm working at Bengaluru. Ct: 7975421774

NADAR PRETTY Girl Rich Family Diverse No Child Seeks Groom 36–38/5–6ft income 1/L Chennai Only 9940456098

45,BA HINDU Divorcee,2 Children Very Fair.Seeks Below 50yrs Good Family Back Ground Chennai . 9025791355

34yrs BA Govt. Bank employee seeks Govt Job groom age upto 37, caste no bar. Ct: 9597061541

MUDALIAR 26/163, Beautiful, MBBS, MS–OG,Doing, Father Builder, Elite Family,CNB. 9363986547,9363767415

MUDALIAR: 25/ V. Fair & Beautiful, B. Tech, Accenture, Sr. Analyst, Bangalore, Rs.1200000 PA, Well settled Family – Seeks groom India / Abroad – 8925019776

HINDU NADAR Fair 162cm 28yr BE Chennai Bride Seeks Engineer Groom Work in Chennai /Bangalore 93810 44905

BRAHMIN
BUSINESS / AFFLUENT FAMILY
A Corporate and Big Business Brahmin Family in South India invites alliance for their daughter 30/165 (who has finished masters from top class university). Matching from Affluent Family or Corporate Group.
The Boy should be tall, well educated from big business family / corporate group
megawedding2021@gmail.com

Viswakarma Dentist, 1996/172cm, own Clinic in Chennai, seeks Qualified, well settled Groom from Chennai, caste no bar Contact: 9841041225

ELITE MUDALIAR 33yrs PG divorcee seeks Employed or Business Groom in Chennai Caste no bar. Ct:9025049368

YADHAVA VEG 29/172cm BTech MBA bangalore seeks banglore based USA Groom CNB Ct: Geetham 9884858014

BRIDES WANTED

BUSINESS

AGE 37 Handsome, Comfortable Groom needs VIP Girl and first Marriage, Remarriage, Divorce. Ct: 7401489892

COSMOPOLITAN

GAVARA, 28Y, Jr. Doctor in Delhi AIIMS, Very handsome Groom seeks suitable bride, Jayasimha Parinaya Vedika, Whatsapp.9000803380

DIVORCEE

SEEKING BRIDE for 60 /178 cm issueless groom . she is ready to embrace a association and build a meaningful relationship. If you are a well–settled, kind–hearted woman seeking a loving and committed partner, we invite you to reach out. Serious inquiries are welcome. GSM 88387 44120

COIMBATORE, 41/155CMS, employed in MNC expecting educated girl preferably from Coimbatore Surroundings. No interest in horoscope, caste no bar. Call: 98431 69594, 94430 60030

Bangalore based Own Business 52 / 173 cm Naidu - Brahmin Intercaste Father of 2 Girls : 22 Employed. 16 having Special Needs. seeks Divorcee / Widow 36 to 45 yrs. Caste No Bar. WhatsApp 95382 98649. Email: Pvrjmb@gmail.com

✔ **Looking for** Hindu veg life partner around 40 yrs, for a divorcee man of 50 yrs settled MNC chennai. Contact: 9840211389.

DOCTOR

KAMMA
Pursuing MD Radiology
Chennai Mrugasira 174 cms
50c 9.9.93 very fair & cultured, seeking alliance from PG
KAMMA DOCTOR BRIDES only.
: 9396366200

HINDU NADAR, 26/165cm, MBBS (ENT), working in UK. Seeks Suitable Bride Ct: K.Raman Nadar 9380791999

PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED

BRIDE WANTED
My son is a 20-year-old boy, an Australian Citizen, Studying Software Engineering and Finance Technology at Monash University (Melbourne, Australia,55th best in the World); Physically challenged, cannot walk, and is Super intelligent, has Good hearing and Good vision.
Ancestral Native Coimbatore, Tamilnadu.
We are looking for a girl of Non-Consummation.
Caste no bar, religion no bar, education no bar, money no bar, must speak Tamil or English and must be interested in taking care of her physically challenged husband.
WhatsApp your details to
+61 492 279 067

MALAYALAM

BRIDES WANTED
Kerala Brahmin (Nambisan) age 37, Film Maker
B.Sc., Visual Communications MFA Newyork University, TISCH School of Arts, Singapore. Currently working for Amazon Prime and Gayathri Cinemas as Director, Editor for new Projects, 5feet 10inches, Vegetarian, Handsome, Teetotaler with Good Family Values. Family Settled in Chennai for 50 years, seeking Kerala or Tamil Brahmin, Educated, Compassionate Bride between 24-34 years.
Contact:
9444067776
Email:
hariharan.gce@gmail.com

HINDI

BANIYA Caste 28 / 6' Smart looking Technology Analyst B'lore Seeks Well Educated & Homely Girl. 9894321656, 8012050841.

KANNADA

WANTED BRIDE in 40Yrs, entrepreneur, unmarried, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada & English knowledge for our son aged 54 Years. Mb-9449817937

TAMIL

CHRISTIAN CSI Protestant Nadar Boy, 29/5.9, B.Tech, MBA, IT MNC, Chennai Ct: 9445447952

CHRISTIAN NADAR, Doctor, Divorcee 35yrs/178cm, MBBS, Dip in Cardiology better earning lives in Nagercoil seeks qualified/ Divorced Bride. 9003983230

RC CHRISTIAN, 41yrs/170, B.E. Software Engineer, never married, working for mnc, Chennai, CT–9500188067

Vanniakula Kshatriya 48/175 M.Arch, MBA, Barani Bachelor Sr.Consultant Employd in Chennai medium fair upper middle class seeks Employd Medical, Bank & SWE bride. CT:94434-27045.

VISWAKARMA, Doctor Parents,Seek alliance for their Divorcee son, MBA, 12 LPA, PVT company. 40/177, Pooratathi - Meena Rasi, having 9yr old son. no dowry, Ct: 99945 35673

TAMIL

MUDALIYAR BOY age 35, Star: Rohini, fair complexion, Scale II officer in Nationalised bank seeks good looking girl from same caste or equal. Telugu kannada. matching star preferred. No other demands 9445311859

RC MUDALIAR 28 MBA 170 V. Fair Multimillionaire Seeks RC Own Factory Business V.VIP Family Caste No Bar Contact: 7550113468

HINDU NADAR BE, MS Texas, 27/175cm 5,00,000 p/m, Seeks Suitable Bride. Contact:K.A Raman Nadar 9380791999

ALLIANCE INVITED from parents of any Tamil Hindu girl aged 29 to 33yrs. for 36yrs self propelled Teetotaller –9043631278. jk100gps@gmail.com

59, HANDSOME, Clean Habits, Comfortable Person Needs Widow / Divorcee. Ct: 9360663852

AGAMUDAYA MUDALIYAR, 42 Mirugasiridam PhD TN Govt Job Rs 1.35 Lakh P/M. 'No Broker' Divorced: 7904550883

SC, 31Years, ME, Team Leader, 18Lacs PA. Seeks Any One Degree. Fair,Normal Family Ok. Ct:7824023030

Tamil Mudaliar, 33 years/183 cms Hastha Star Data Scientist MNC fair seeks good looking Bride with good Family background. Cont 9441088542.

TAMIL

✔ **PILLAI(KARUNEEGAR),** DOB:24–01–92, BE, Veg, Job: MNC (Software) Chennai, Annual Income: 25 lakhs. Seeking a suitable bride from the same or any other community. Ph: 9841784047 Email: pingme.arul@gmail.com.

HINDU PILLAI, 37 Yrs /173cm, Unmarried, Ayilyam Star, Kadagam Rasi, B.E, Software/ Chennai, Sal: 50k Pm, Seeks Unmarried/ Widow/ Divorcee Bride Preferably Without Issues, Relocation Possible, Caste No Bar, No Expectation. Ct: 94446 64627

MUDALIAR ELITE 29/170 Handsome, MBBS,MS, Govt Hospital,1200000,Affluent Family,CNB. 9363986547, 9363767415

YADHAVA, 27, Software Engineer at Salem, seeks suitable graduate bride 9894366469, 9994290232

IYENGAR, VADAKALAI, Bharadwajam, Moolam, 27/165, BTech (MTech), employed in Accenture,Chennai, Rs.10 LPA, Only son, teetotaler, own flat seeks suitable girl, any degree,employed. Sub–sect no bar. Ct: 9940668758

SINGLE 50 healthy, well settled need any Brahmin Bride except Bharadwaja Gothram. Divorcee, widow acceptable. Contact: Dr. Bala 8610578698

WANTED BRIDE
Brahmin,Iyer, Ashtasahasram,Kaushika, Age 31/174 cm/ Engineer with MBA in Corporate Finance(Canada), CFA candidate, Fair, Investor, Rich /Affluent Business Family seeks a Beautiful, Well Educated, Suitable Iyer Girl of 28 - 29 years from a good Family Background.
Phone: 9884043225/Whatsapp.

BRIDE WANTED
MUDALIYAR
27 Yrs/171 cm. / BE.MS (US) Fair Handsome, Business, Affluent Family in Chennai,Seeks suitable fair bride from Affluent family
Ct: 7200702926
Email: balavas24@gmail.com

BRIDES WANTED
WELL SETTLED Boy, 34, Viswakarma (CNB) Chartered Accountant, Director of Own Business, Teetotaler, seeks Bride.
Interested Parents please Get in touch.
Ph:9789063534.

Chettiar Unmarried 1983 /5.11 Btech MBA Manager 14 lakhs/PA seeks suitable Telugu / Tamil Alliance. Veg preferred.9444559768 /044-79609970

B.E, 37yrs 5.8 Pillai (Sozhiya Vellalar) Employed &Upper Middle Class Family Seeks Suitable Bride, Star: Swathi (Caste No Bar) Ct: 98432 52888.

TAMIL

BRIDE WANTED
For Tamil Brahmin Divorcee and issueless
Age 30, height 6.4"
Currently located in U.K.
Hails from affluent business family based at Coimbatore.
Caste no bar.
Email :
bj1841994@gmail.com

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(OC/OBC Preferred - Middle, Upper Middle, Affluent - all profiles welcome)
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E: rajeevrajamani@gmail.com
Ph:95970 70750

Vaaniyar Chetty - 38/176cm Visagam MS.(Sweden) Working Sweden 60L PA (Swedish Citizen and OCI) Seeks BE/ MS/ MBA/ MCA/ CA/ PHD/ Prof. Bride Caste No Bar. Contact: 98404 29799.

SAIVA MUDALIAR Aug1984 Advocate and Industrialist seeks Graduate and Good Looking Bride. Any Vegetarian, Subsect NoBar. Ct: 74483 16569

34, AYILYAM, Hindu, ICWAI,MBA(IIM) Manager, SC, seeks Ragu Kethu Bride Chennai, Caste no bar. 96772 66232

Bride Wanted Mudaliyar 31yrs BS ME (US)Own Schools&Colleges Elite Business Family 9710093999/8939691888

SC(AD), 29YRS, B.Arch, Elite Business Family in Chennai. Seeks Suitable Bride. 9710093999 / 8939691888

Bride Wanted for Brahmin Tamil Iyengar(V) Srivatsa 32, Aswini, Business at Hyd, Simple Marriage Ct: 9632733112

Senguntha Mudaliar Divorcee BE, 34/165cm, Medical Wholesale. seeks suitable Bride CNB Ct: 8939691888

TAMIL

TAMIL YADAVA May 1983 BE MBA Divorced Well settled. Seeks suitable Bride. Caste no Bar. Ct: 9566498878

Saiva pillai/ 28/180 Ahmedabad well educated employed elite groom seeks educated employed bride. 9442649298

Mudaliyar/ Pillai, 29/165cms, B.com, MSW, LLB Advocate, Chennai, well settled seeks educated working bride. Contact: 94450 77918 / 94444 95948.

TELUGU

RICH NAIDU 28yrs, BE, ME, Elite business family in Chennai.Seeks Suitable Bride Ct:9710093999/ 8939691888

NAIDU 32 B.Tech IT PGDM HR Chennai Seeks Naidu(Any) Bride educated Dr/ CA/Engg & employed Cell: 9444753417

NAIDU 37/164CMS, 70kgs, BBA MBA working Chennai 7Lakhs PA, own house in native. Caste No Bar. 9894428574.

BRIDE WANTED Rich Naidu 28yrs MBBS, MS Own Hospitals Chennai, Elite Business Family 9710093999/ 9710091999

BALIJA 29/180 cms, BE/ M.S (Ger) working in Germany 51Lpa. Seeks Suitable Qualified Bride– Sub Sects No Bar. Ct: 9442623203 / 9442838203

KAMMA NAIDU,TELUGU, 27, 172cm, Fair, Visakam,Thulam,B.E, Chemical Engineer, Own Business, 5Lac/pm. Well Settled Family in Chennai. Seeks:Fair & Profesionaly Qualified Bride. Call: 9962518199, Email: sm@smsla.in

ELITE GAVARA NAIDU Family from Chennai,only Son having Business in Entire South India with good Networth,02/08/1999, 5.9,Meenam,Uthiradam,Veryfair,Seeks Bride from Elite Family only(Sub sect ok) Ct:0–9444071701

Kamma Naidu Tiruvonam/Magaram Divorcee BE 47yr/170 Pvt seeks widow &divorcee any Hindu:9790271078

BRIDE WANTED Rich Kamma Naidu, 27yrs,B.Tech, Elite Business Family in Chennai. Ct: 9710093999/ 9710091999

CHENNAI, BALIJA naidu, only son, with good net assets, 29yrs/5.5'/ BE,MS, own business, seeks well educated bride. Subsect no bar. Ct: 9840445567.

BRIDE WANTED
KAMMA NAIDU
40yrs, 174cm, MBA
Business Man, Rental Income Around 5Lakhs P.M.
No expectations. C.N.B.
98407 97575
93637 65330

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BRAHMIN, 31, 185 cms, Businessman. MBA. Lives in Chennai. Parents are Entrepreneurs. Family is financially well off. Looking a like minded match. Contact: 6366448343

BRAHMIN IYER, 35, 173 cms, Divorced, Employed, MS in (Eng). Lives in USA. Parents are retired person. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match. Contact: 6366448344

KAMMA NAIDU, 29, 183 cms, Businessman, MS. Lives in Coimbatore. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for an amiable match. Contact: 6366448343

KAMMA NAIDU, 31, 180 cms, Businessman, BE. Lives in Chennai. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for an amiable match. Contact: 6366448344

ELITE GROOMS WANTED

BRAHMIN IYER, 27, 155 cms, Chemist, Masters. Lives in Australia. Father is a working professional. Family is financially well off. Looking for an amiable match. Contact: 6366448344

SALIYAR, 36, 170 cms, Divorced, Entrepreneur, PGD. Lives in Chennai. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for an amiable match. Contact: 6366448343

EZHAVA, 23, 157 cms, Software Profession, BE. Lives in Chennai. Parents are Working Professional. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match. Contact: 6366448343

CHRISTIAN CSI, 33, 155 cms, Employed, MS (Engg) in USA. Lives in USA. Father is a Employed. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match. Contact: 6366448344

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VELLALA BOY 35/ 172, SWE(Canada). Origin: Trivandrum. Seeks alliance from an educated family (caste no bar). Preference: Malayalees/ Tamilians. Cont: 9994724482/ 9994724483

PALGHAT BRAHMIN Aiyar Vadamal boy 34 MA 172cm Ayilyam working in Ernakulam seeking Alliance from Kerala / Tamilnad brides 9946451193

HINDI

1985/175CM, 50 Lakhs PA, Never Married, Hyderabad. WhatsApp: 96290 12248

TAMIL

CSI CHRISTIAN NADAR 30/ 175/ B.E., M.S./Smart, Work in Europe. Seeks Suitable Bride. Contact: 8610774283

SAIVA PILLAI,36,Rohini, IT, 35K pm, Madurai, Own House. Caste No Bar. Ct: 8056588515

NADAR, SECOND Marriage, 47,B.E, 15L CTC, Fair, Seeks Bride. Chennai. Call: 9962355158

HINDU BC Qualification BE, MBA Parents Doctors Rich High Networth, Own Business Divorce Separated within a week.Caste No bar. Any BC or FC Unmarried Pref. Divorce or Widow also Pref Without Child. Ct: 9789704133

SOZIA VELLALAR/ Pillai Subsects 27years B.com BL. 14Lacs PA. MNC Chennai. Veg/Non Veg Contact: 7358200722

HINDU NADAR, 27, 159cm, BCA, MBA., Viruchagam, Anusham, Own Provision Store Chennai, well Settled. Seeks suitable Educated Bride. 9445433812

TAMIL VISWAKARMA (GS) Boy, M.E 27yrs IT Professional in Intel, Bangalore seeks proposals from the same community, educated family. Contact: 99441 67800.

PILLAI NV 39/165 Uthiradam Makaram BE MBA project manager IT Chennai 18 LPA divorcee (marriage not consummated) seeks tamil bride 30 to 36 yrs unmarried divorcee without issue employed in IT/BANK/Govt cast no bar.6385607722 / 9283736478

BE Bits Pilani 6'2 Height Mudaliar 32yrs Sr.Product Mngr Bng Sal 43 lacs seeks Bride 5'4 Same or Allied Castes Tamil,Telugu. Ct: 7382620365.

TAMIL IYER Vadama Boy Uthiram May 1996 born, Toronto–based, 28 yrs, 5ft 10inch Software Engineer. Boy Visiting Delhi on March 31. Contact +16478869280 Chander.krishnamurthy@gmail.com.

BRIDE WANTED Hindu Nadar 39yrs/ 170 c.m / M.Sc.,B.Ed / PGT /Govt / contact no: 9494003635

MUDALIAR PARENTS invite Alliance for their Smart Looking Son 29 / 172 / B.E.(Aero) / Sharjah / 2.00L pm seeks Well Educated & Gud Looking Brides Subset No Bar 9962999136.

TAMIL

NAYAKKAR, SR.ELECTRITION, 32/ 167cm, 4.5Lacks PA, cast no bar. Ct.9025230151

PILLAI 36 Swati/ Tula Govt officer Chennai 13 LPA looking bride caste no bar employed Ct 8056033532

32 YRS Naidu Boy 5.10, BE,MS & PhD employed in USA seeks suitable Bride Tamil/ Telugu born between 1992–1995 with professional background Contact Sairams2002@hotmail.com

WE ARE seeking a bride for our only son, aged 30, who holds B.Tech degree and a PG from IIM. He manages our family business in the Logistics industry with a turn over of around 15 Cr. We are primarily based in Hosur & Chennai. He has a younger sister who is yet to be married, parents intercaste marriage and managing the family business. Earlier marriage ended in a divorce. We are open to any community from a decent Hindu family. Looking forward to a prospective bride with recent photograph and horoscope. Parents from Government services are preferred. Contact us at devtara093@gmail.com

WANTED HOMELY girl (age 33–37) for a Hindu (Mutharaiyar) smart boy, 38yrs, 5ft 2inch, Degree holder own business. Widowed or divorcee accepted. Contact 9942356552

AGE 37 Handsome, Comfortable Groom needs VIP Girl and first Marriage, Remarriage, Divorce. Ct: 9597834451

TAMIL IYER Unmarried Bharad Wajam Pooradam-1. 39 years, B.Tech, Working in Bangalore Drawing Rs. 25 LPA, Looking for Suitably Qualified any South Indian Brahmin Girls. WhatsApp: 9715717881 gvcs49@gmail.com

B.TECH,38,BUSINESS AFFLUENT,INTERCASTE, Pooradam,Dhanusu @Chennai want Slim,Beautiful bride CNB,Prefer Dr,Engr/Any Deg 9840362628, 8925413491

TAMIL BRAHMIN Iyer 35yrs Male, Weighing Machine Business in Namakkal seeks Bride in same community. Divorcee / Widower also ok. 9738233431

Tamil Iyengar PQM for M.Tech data eng. 31 yrs / 180cm / chithirai / bharadwaj / parents intercaste marriage. Contact: 9300502792.

TAMIL

BRIDEGROOM WANTED
SENGUNTHA MUDALIAR,
26, BTECH MBA, Fair looking, into father's business, family is financially well off, looking for a business family match within Pondicherry (or) around in Pondicherry only
9443469444

DOCTOR MD (Pathology), DCH, 38 yrs, Hindu BC, Divorcee without child, placed in private medical college seeks well settled, compatible & affectionate Groom. CNB.Ct:8056868090

Reputed Senguntha Mudaliar fmly seeks Chennai based MD/ MS/MDS / MTech boy for their 27/5'6'/65/ fair slim nonveg MDS girl. 9444274644

Vanniakula kshatriya, 29yrs/165cms, MBBS, MD, (Paediatrics) on going, Govt. Doctor. seeks professional Groom (pref. Doctor) Ct: 98842 44151.

RC GIRL 28/170cm Working in Microsoft Parents Keralite Settled in Chennai Own Business Seeks Chennai Based Groom from a Good Family Background. 9345262574

TELUGU

KAMMA BE, MS, USA 1980, Uthiram 163cms seeks BE MS USA Groom. Contact: 99762 54300.

TELUGU

GROOM WANTED Rich Naidu 25yrs MBBS MS Own Hospital in Chennai Elite Business Family 9710093999/ 8939691888

KAMMA NAIDU 25yrs, MBBS, Elite Business family in Chennai. Seeks Suitable Groom Ct:9710093999/ 9710091999

HINDU TELUGU Naidu Born Aug 1990/ 165cm Ph.D Scholar smart medium complexion from a Reputed family seeks well educated and settled groom in India born after 1987 Ct:9790908109

KAMMA, 98 born/ 180cm pretty smart girl, very affluent with engineering colleges and business looking for tall handsome affluent kamma grooms preferably Chennai. 7305010105

RICH NAIDU 23yrs, MA(UK), Elite business family in Chennai.Seeks Suitable Groom Ct:9962791888/ 7094991999

CHENNAI, BALIJA naidu, only daughter, upper middle class 25yrs/5'/ MCA working in Bangalore seeks well educated well settled groom. Subsect no bar.Ct: 87542 29161.

NAIDU GIRL, Good Looking 28/165cm Aswini, BE., ME, pursuing PhD Doctoral studies in Satellite Communications Neuromorphic Computing - Europe seeking suitable Groom PhD / MS in IVY League Colleges in USA from good family back ground. Contact: 98401 03686 / bvraj1962@gmail.com

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PUBLIC NOTICE

My client M/s Pratibha Chilamkurti daughter of Naryana Rao Chilamkurti resident of F 403, Nagarjuna Geenridge, Sector 2, HSR Layout, Bangalore 560 102 is the absolute owner of the property in Kogilu Village, Yalhanka Hobli, North Bangalore, bearing : Plot No. 88. Assessment No. 95/1, 3, 4, 5, 692/3, 92/5B. Khatha No. 167/88. Residential Area in this an extent of Acre 1800 sft. Denoted as RESIDENTIAL AREA PLOT NO.88 (Eighty Eight) within the following boundaries; North : Site No. 87, West : 30 Feet Road, South : Site No. 89, East : Site No. 81.

Within these boundaries the above extent of 1800 sft (One Thousand Eight Hundred Square Foot Only) is owned by my client having acquired the same in terms a sale deed dated 23/03/2007 as Document No. 28917/0607, at the office of the Sub Registrar, Yalhanka. Our Client has lost the original sale deed bearing Document No. 28917/0607dated 23/03/2007 in Bangalore, during transit and is unable to trace the same despite best efforts.

The General Public are hereby notified that if any person transacts with regard to said property with any person who has custody of the above registered sale deed, they will be doing so at their own risk and consequences and my Client will not be responsible for any loss or damage.

If anyone finds the above mentioned document request you to return it to the address mentioned below within 14 days.

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Bangalore-560 040.
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Devotional fervour: The traditional five-wick lamp is an important part of the festival.

Floral adornment: Apart from jewellery, strands of flowers are also part of the finery worn by the male devotees.

Peace and poise: It is believed that the feminine touch propitiates the Goddess Bhagavathy and brings her blessings to all.

Lighter moments: The festival procession is older than any pride march.

Patient prayer: Many families come together to mark the sacred occasion.

Water scarcity threatens city's car wash business

The ban on misuse of potable water has left many car washing centres grappling with losses

WATER WOES

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Borewell water and tanker water being the primary source for the business, the present water scarcity has proved to be a major challenge. SUDHAKARA JAIN

As the water crisis tightens its grip on Bengaluru, businesses reliant on water, such as car washing centres, are facing unprecedented challenges. The recent ban by the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) on using drinking water for non-essential purposes, including car washing, has sent ripples through the industry.

The ban, accompanied by a hefty fine of ₹5,000 for every violation, has left many car washing centres grappling with financial losses and operational constraints. With borewell water and tanker water being the primary source for these businesses, the ongoing water scarcity has amplified their woes.

Rajesh Kumar, proprietor of a car washing centre in Koramangala, said, "Our business has been severely impacted by the water crisis. Initially, our approach involved utilising water tanker services to fulfill the car washing requirements of our customers. However, following a stern caution from the BWSSB, we swiftly discontinued the usage of tanker services altogether, leading us to suspend our car wash operations entirely."

Manoj Kumar, owner of a car spa in Bommanahalli said, "The situation is dire for us. We are witnessing a significant drop in customers as people are becoming more conscious about water usage. As a consequence, our business has witnessed a sharp decline, with only a handful of customers seeking our services now."

In J.P. Nagar, Anand Gowda, another proprietor, said, "We've had to temporarily close our car washing centre due to the ongoing water crisis. I had a team of five people working alongside me. However, with our operations halted, they've been left with no choice but to seek alternative means of earning a livelihood. Some have resorted to daily wage labor in construction projects, while one has returned to his hometown in Kalaburagi. It's disheartening to see our livelihoods threatened by factors beyond our control. The authorities need to provide alternative solutions to help businesses like ours survive."

A few car washing centres, in response to the water scarcity, have implemented dry washing as an alternative method. Rajendra Kumar, who runs a car washing centre in Bannerghatta Road, said, "Water is indispensable for our business operations; there's simply no alternative when it comes to vehicle washing. Given the current circumstances, we find ourselves in a challenging position. To accommodate our customers' needs despite the water scarcity, we've introduced a dry washing option. This entails cleaning the car solely with cloth and utilising a vacuum for the interior, ensuring we adapt to the situation while maintaining service quality."

Prasanna K., another proprietor of a car washing center, explained that they utilise only one litre of water along with 30 ml of a solution to wash an entire car, sometimes even two, contingent on the vehicle size. "By this method, we are surviving our business," he added.

While the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) is advocating treated water for non-essential purposes, car washing centres argue that using treated water is not feasible due to its "high salt content, which can harm vehicle paint and quality."

However, experts pointed out that borewell water has higher salt content.

BWSSB extends mandatory tap aerator deadline till April 7

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

This regulation will apply to all taps designated for cleaning purposes, and taps intended for washing hands and feet in public areas such as malls, eateries, and offices. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) on Saturday extended the deadline for mandatory tap aerators for bulk water users till April 7.

In the midst of the prevailing water scarcity in Bengaluru, BWSSB has mandated the installation of aerators, aimed at water conservation, in all taps in public areas. Additionally, the board has urged households to voluntarily adopt these measures as well.

On March 21, BWSSB granted establishments a ten-day window to install aerators, setting a deadline of March 31.

On public request

However, in response to public requests for additional time, BWSSB Chairman V. Ram Prasath Manohar announced an extension of the deadline.

This regulation will apply to all taps designated for cleaning purposes, including those at handwash sinks, toilets, and taps intended for washing hands and feet in public areas such as malls, eateries, and offices.

In its statement issued on Saturday, BWSSB announced that those failing to install aerators on all public taps in the city by April 7 will face a ₹5,000 fine for the initial violation, coupled with a 50% reduction in water supply to their establishments.

BWSSB clarified its authority to enforce water supply cuts under Section 53 of the BWSSB Act, 1964.

Green rating

Meanwhile, BWSSB had announced earlier that individuals who install aerators and adopt other water conservation measures would receive a "green star rating", similar to the rating system used for restaurants and apartments. Aerators will restrict the flow of water and help save up to 65% to 80% of water, BWSSB said in the release.

If you face water problem in April, May, call BWSSB chairman on Fridays

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Citizens can get in touch with the Chairman of Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) Ram Prasath Manohar every Friday, between 9.30 a.m. and 10.30 a.m., in the months of April and May to discuss their water woes. The number to call is 080-22945119.

The schedule of the phone-in programme, which used to be conducted on the first and fifth Saturdays of the month, has now been altered as the board expects more water-related complaints in the peak summer months.

Citizens can discuss their drinking water problems, sewage pipe and manhole leakage issues, meter and billing issues, and seek solutions during the phone-in programme.

FIR against selection list going missing from KPSC

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Vidhana Soudha police on Friday registered an FIR against unknown people following the mysterious missing of a confidential file containing the selection list of Junior Engineers (JEs- Civil) of the Karnataka Slum Development Board (KSDB).

Based on the complaint filed by Raghavendra J., Secretary, KPSC, the police have registered a case and initiated a probe to ascertain the detailed movement of the file where it was physically seen the last time .

The file, according to the complaint, was received by the office of the Confidential Section - 3, of the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) at Udyog Soudha in the city on January 22. The staff who submitted the file even obtained the received acknowledgment, after which it went mysteriously missing.

The KPSC issued a memo in February to all its sections to check if they had received the file accidentally and to return it .

However, the team informed the KPSC that it could not find the file .

Concerned over the missing file, the commission, on March 13, conveyed a meeting and decided to hand over the case to the police.

The police have summoned the staff based on the file movement for a detailed questioning.

'Blink': How a Kannada film thwarted the 'Premayugam Boys' dominance

Vivek M.V.
BENGALURU

A still from 'Blink'. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Between February and March, the Malayalam industry produced three blockbusters. The romantic comedy *Premalu,* the horror drama *Bramayugam* starring Mammootty, and the survival drama *Manjummel Boys* broke records. Of these, *Manjummel Boys* made the maximum impact at the box office, racing to ₹200 crore mark by performing brilliantly in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka apart from its home turf. Such was the dominance of these movies that fans online called the phenomenon *Premayugam Boys,* the Indian version of Hollywood's famous *Barbenheimer,* involving *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer.*

In this kind of tough competitive market, sci-fi Kannada film from debutant Srinidhi Bengaluru *Blink* released on on March 8 alongside two big Kannada films

With a time-travel concept enhanced by tight writing and fine performances from Dheekshith Shetty, Chaitra J Achar, and Gopalkrishna Deshpande, *Blink* emerged as the unlikely winner at the Kannada box office. Starting as the clear underdog with just 17 shows across Karnataka in the first week, the movie was propelled by consistent positive word-of-mouth. In its third week, *Blink* secured 87 shows, a commendable feat for a film made by unheralded names.

"We made *Blink* knowing very well that it was an experimental movie. The common opinion from people around us was that the film would not appeal to the masses and would impress the multiplex crowd", says Mr. Srinidhi, who hails from a theatre group called Aneka, where he met the film's producer Ravichandra A.J., another theatre enthusiast.

It helped *Blink's case* that *Karataka Damanaka* and *Ranganayaka* turned out to be forgettable affairs. The Kannada audiences, who encouraged several well-made thrillers, turned to *Blink*. They weren't disappointed. "Slowly, all kinds of audiences began watching our movie; we began to witness 90 % occupancy from the first Monday in all screens," says Mr. Srinidhi.

Blink begins with a note that the film is an homage to American films *Predestination* and *Primer,* the legendary play *Oedipus Rex,* and the Kannada classic *Ranganayaki*. With a small budget, the team pulled off a film that did justice to its genre without compromising on the writing and production.

Producer Ravichandra A.J., a data engineer, banked on clever promotional strategies. Instead of treading the usual path of several promotional interviews, he believed in seizing the strong buzz immediately after the release.

"We ensured at least 30 videos of the audience response were out on our different social media sites everyday. We saw fans recommending the film to people on X and Instagram. After the first weekend, we shared a form on social media, asking people to mention the city they wish to see the movie. We got around 25000 responses. Based on the data, we emailed multiplexes, asking them to provide more shows. They responded positively because the film had maintained its good buzz," explains Mr. Ravichandra.

Srinidhi says the Kannada audience is ready for fresh attempts. "The industry needs to believe that people want to watch such movies. If you look at the Malayalam industry, they have already made four films in 2024 that are worthy of discussion. Our (Kannada) films should be discussed and decoded as well. When we interacted with people outside theatres showing *Blink*, many said they had watched a Kannada film after 4-5 years. We are in danger of losing our audiences," says Srinidhi.

Row between neighbours ends in murder

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 42-year-old man was allegedly stabbed to death by his neighbour over a trivial row at Hemmigepura in Talgahattapura on Friday evening.

The deceased Panchalinga, 42, a daily wage labourer, had objected to his neighbour Chiranjeevi, a truck driver, for plying the truck in front of his house which caused the dust to get into the house. A heated argument ensued between them following which Chiranjeevi left in huff only to return with two of his associates . A fight broke out again following which Chiranjeevi and his associates allegedly stabbed Panchalinga with a knife on his chest and escaped .

He was rushed to a hospital but, was declared as brought dead.

The Talaghattapura police have registered a case of murder.

Man dupes family with kidnap drama, extorts ₹1.2 lakh

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Parappana Agrahara police are on a massive manhunt for a man who faked a kidnap story to extort ₹1.2 lakh from the family of a youth on Tuesday.

The accused made a call to Vijaya Nayar informing him that his relative, presently staying in Madhya Pradesh, had been abducted and in their custody. The accused demanded ₹3 lakh for his release.

The family followed his instructions and transferred ₹1.2 lakh without even checking the details. Soon after the money was transferred, the family called their relative in Madhya Pradesh to realise he was safe and sound

Realising that they had been cheated, the family filed a complaint with the police. The police have registered a case under the IT Act and under impersonation and cheating.

Man kills wife and attempts to end life over domestic row

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 28-year-old man allegedly hacked his 24-year-old wife to death and attempted to end his life over a domestic row in Jigani in Anekal taluk on Friday.

The couple had been married for over a year and the victim, Arbiya Taj, left for her parents' house after a fight with her husband one and half months ago .

The accused Mubarak used to call her to try and convince her to return, but she was adamant.

Armed

On Friday, Mubarak, armed with a machete, went to get her back, but Arbiya locked the door refusing to go.

The accused forcibly entered the house and attacked Arbiya with a machete, killing her on the spot, said the police.

When the family, hearing the commotion, rushed to help, but Mubarak attempted to end his life.

Further investigation

The seriously wounded Mubarak was rushed to the hospital and the Jigani police are awaiting for his recovery to take him into the custody for further investigations.

(Those having distress or suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahaya Vani on 104 for help)

Applications invited for conversation course

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Bengaluru City University has invited applications from eligible candidates for admission to conversation course in Foreign language (Italian) for the academic year 2023-24.

Those above 16 years and have passed 10th standard / SSLC are eligible to apply.

The last date for submitting an application without fine is March 31, 2024.

With a fine of Rs. 200, applications can be submitted on or before April 7, 2024.

For details, call 080-080-29572019 or mail to registrarbcu@gmail.com

CHANAKYA NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY
[NAAC Accredited]
Nyaya Nagar, Mithapur, Patna- 800 001, Ph. No. - 0612-2352300, Website: - www.cnlu.ac.in
Advt. No.: CNLU/LL.M./03/2023-24 Date : 12.02.2024
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Applications are invited for admission to **LL.M. (Master of Laws),** one year course for the Academic Year **2024–2025.** Last date to fill in online application form is Tuesday, the 30th April, 2024. Interested candidates may visit the website of University, i.e., www.cnlu.ac.in for detailed Curriculum.
REGISTRAR

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Applications are invited for admission to Kerala Engineering/ Architecture/ Pharmacy/ Medical & Medical Allied Courses in various Professional Colleges in the State for the year 2024-25. Eligible Candidates can submit online application through the website of the Commissioner for Entrance Examinations **www.cee.kerala.gov.in** up to **17.04.2024, 5.00 PM.** For details see the Prospectus and notifications available on the above website.
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Bidar and Kolar have the most malnourished children in State, Haveri and Udupi the least

A total of 27,73,247 children under the age of six were weighed during a survey to identify those suffering from malnutrition

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

A survey conducted by the Department of Women and Child Development in 2023 revealed that Bidar and Kolar districts had the highest share of children suffering malnutrition.

A total of 27,73,247 children under the age of 6 were weighed across Karnataka for the survey to identify children suffering from malnutrition. Of these, 2,20,049 were found to be malnourished. Of them 73,300 children (2.64%) have been found to be Severely Acute Malnourished (SAM), and 1,46,749 children (5.29%) were found to be Moderately Acute Malnourished (MAM).

In Bidar district, a total of 86,163 children were weighed, out of which 4,327 children (5.02%) were suffering from SAM and 6,826 (7.92%) from MAM, topping the charts.

In Kolar, a total of 72,242 children were weighed, out of which 3,333 children (4.61%) suffered from SAM and 3,948 (5.46%) suffered from MAM.

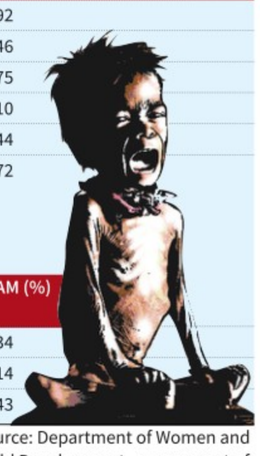
Haveri district has the lowest number of SAM children. Here, when 1,05,367 were weighted, only 657 children (0.62%) were found to be suffering from SAM, and 2,463 (2.34%) from MAM. This was followed by Udupi, in which 0.72% of the children covered in the survey suffer from SAM.

Districts with higher malnutrition rates

District	Children weighed	SAM (%)	MAM (%)
Bidar	86,163	5.02	7.92
Kolar	72.242	4.61	5.46
Yadgir	93,798	3.97	6.75
Kalaburagi	1,64,129	3.90	6.10
Shivamogga	44,650	3.42	6.44
Raichur	1,54,228	3.28	8.72

Districts with lower malnutrition rates

District	Children weighed	SAM (%)	MAM (%)
Haveri	1,05,367	0.62	2.34
Udupi	43,605	0.71	2.14
Kodagu	8,736	0.90	3.43



SAM — Severely Acute Malnourished; MAM — Moderately Acute Malnourished

Source: Department of Women and Child Development, government of Karnataka

Fund cuts for ICDS

Anganwadi workers claim that poor implementation of programmes, like adoption of malnourished children through anganwadis to provide nutritious food, has led to an increase in the number of malnutrition cases in Karnataka.

However, S. Varalakshmi, president of Anganwadi Employees' Association, said the problem stems from fund cuts for Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programmes in successive years.

"Before 2014, the Central and State sharing for ICDS was in the ratio of 90:10. However it is now 60:40. In the 2021-22 annual budget, fund for the ICDS programme was cut by ₹8,500 crore by the Union Government. However, around ₹300 crore has been cut in the 2024 annual budget. Given these circumstances, how can malnutrition be eradicated?" she asked. Malnutrition figures across India are seeing an upswing, especially post the pandemic, she claimed.

Revised menu

The Karnataka government has recently revised the menu of children anganwadis and decided to provide supplementary nutritious food, some of which are millet-based. The new menu has ready-to-eat khichdi and millet laddu, instead of groundnut chikki provided earlier.

However, "most children do not like millet laddus and khichdi, and are not eating them," said Sunitha, an anganwadi worker from Belagavi. "This may be one of the reasons for high malnutrition among children."

60 acres of forest affected by major fire at BRT Tiger Reserve

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Nearly 60 acres of forest were affected by a major fire, ostensibly triggered by some unidentified miscreants, at Biligiri Ranganathaswamy Temple Tiger (BRT) Reserve, in Chamarajanagar district on Saturday.

The fire was first noticed around 9.30 a.m. near P.G. Palya in the Bylur range of BRT Tiger Reserve.

The fire was set off in an incline at Doddasampige reserve forest where the terrain was steep and approach difficult. Besides, extreme heat and wind were fanning the flames which consumed about 60 acres of forest land, according to authorities.

More than 60 field staff and personnel led by Deputy Conservator of Forests, Deep Contractor, strived hard to douse the blaze which was brought under control by evening.

Authorities, who used drones to assess the extent of fire during the dousing operations, said the miscreants had lit the fire to the ridge line near a dam in the Bylur wildlife range. A case has been registered under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.

From Page One

Making classroom experience seamless for visually challenged

Professor Madhav Rao, associate professor at IIITB, who guided the team, notes that they started working on the technology with the idea that it would particularly help the visually challenged students to understand shapes, images and diagrams.

"When I teach, I should not be limited only to texts or diagrams. It should be seamless; You go to a figure, then explain the concept, move to a formula - it's seamless movements. We wanted to equip this finger lock device with those kinds of seamless changes," says prof. Rao.

"If a diagram is being drawn on the board, the device gives a certain vibration so that the finger starts navigating and gets to understand the closest form of that diagram. Then if the instructor is writing a text, the student will be able to understand the Braille form of the text," he explains, adding that the technology, although in its current form enables the student to understand only planar images like a circle or triangle, is further being developed.

Cost effective and compact

The IITB team's device works on a six-dot Braille system, can be reused and is cost effective. It consists of six Braille dots, tiny motors to control them, and microcontrollers for directions.

According to Kabra the manufacturing cost of the device would be much lesser compared to other Braille devices in the market. "The hardest part was designing the mould and assembling all the things. We had to design everything so compactly and even a millimetre of change would mean the dots will not fit onto the motor," says Kabra who has also incorporated a startup named Chipcron at the institute.

An integrated MTech student at IIIT-B, he developed the technology along with Divyansh Singhal, Chinmay Sultania, Soham Pawar, and Anshul Madurwar - all integrated MTech students at IIIT-B. The team is also considering productising the technology and is looking for partners.

Bail plea of murder accused rejected again

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

The II Additional District and Sessions Judge, Udupi, Dinesh Hegde, rejected for the second time the regular bail application filed by 40-year-old Pravin Arun Chougule, who is accused of murdering four persons of a family at Nejar in Malpe police station limits in 2023.

The judge on Saturday rejected the bail application filed under Section 439 of the Criminal Procedure Code of Chougule, the former cabin crew executive who is accused of murdering his colleague 21-year-old Ainaz, and ,three other members of her family.

In the detailed order, the judge said there was *prima facie* case against Chougule. The judge rejected Chougale's earlier bail application on December 30,2023.

Kodaikanal Solar Observatory: Unravelling the mysteries of the Sun for the last 125 years

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

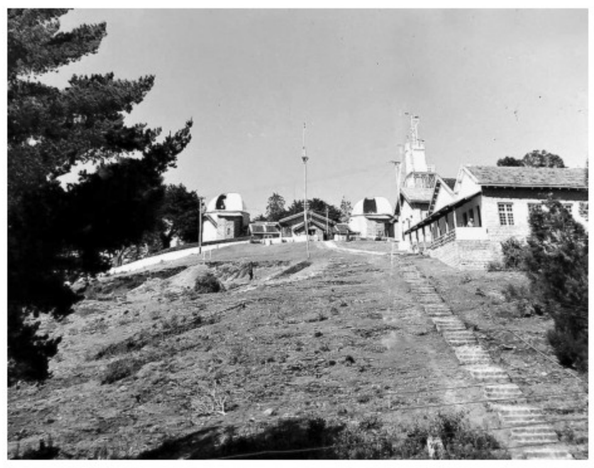
On April 1, the Indian Institutes of Astrophysics (IIA) Kodaikanal Solar Observatory (KSO) will celebrate its quasquicentennial anniversary.

The KSO, located at an altitude of 2,343 meters in the Palani range of hills, was established in 1899 after the Madras Observatory shifted to the picturesque hills of Kodaikanal and since then, for the last 125 years, it has been unraveling the mysteries of the Sun.

According to Ravindra B., professor, Solar Physics, Solar Photosphere, Magnetic Field Measurements, Optical Instrumentation, IIA, one of the observatory's earliest triumphs was the discovery of the Evershed effect in 1909 by John Evershed.

"Imagine a giant whirlpool within a sunspot - that's the essence of this captivating phenomenon. KSO observations revealed the swirling motion of hot gas inside sunspots, with speeds reaching an impressive two kilometers per second. This discovery provided crucial insights into the Sun's internal dynamics and the complex interplay of magnetic fields within sunspots," said Professor Ravindra.

He added that KSO's inquisitive gaze extended beyond sunspots and significantly contributed to understanding solar prominences, the bright, gaseous features that erupt from the Sun's edge.



A view of Kodaikanal Solar Observatory in 1905. FILE PHOTO

Early stalwarts

Some of the stalwarts who solidified KSO's reputation as a leader in solar research are astronomers like John Evershed, T. Royds, and A.R. Narayan.

Professor Ravindra said Royds achieved a remarkable feat by capturing the first-ever photograph of specific oxygen lines in the chromosphere (the layer of the Sun's atmosphere just above the photosphere) outside an eclipse.

"This groundbreaking image provided valuable insights into the Sun's composition and structure. Narayan, along with his team, made critical observations during solar flares, noticing a broadening in spectral lines.

"Their analysis revealed the influence of the Doppler effect, providing a deeper understanding of the physical processes at play during these explosive events," Professor Ravindra said.

Ideal location

Why did the Madras Observatory move to Kodaikanal? It is due to the evaluation (2,343 meters) which is said to provide an ideal vantage point for observing and understanding ionospheric processes.

Prof. Ravindra said that recognising the critical link between solar activity and Earth's upper atmosphere, the ionosphere, an ionospheric and magnetospheric laboratory was established.

"Kodaikanal's unique location near the geomagnetic equator, the imaginary line around the Earth where the magnetic field is vertical, proved to be a significant advantage. Studies conducted here revealed unique features in the ionosphere, particularly the sporadic E layer. This layer exhibits a much higher occurrence rate (nearly 93% of daytime observations) at Kodaikanal compared to other latitudes, highlighting its sensitivity to solar radiation," Prof. Ravindra said.

He added that the observatory's impact transcended the realm of scientific discovery.

"KSO's data played a vital role in calibrating and validating measurements from other observatories around the world. This collaborative effort ensured consistent and reliable solar observations, fostering a global understanding of our star," he added.

Digitisation

The KSO has also consistently embraced technological advancements to push the boundaries of solar research.

The 20th century witnessed the incorporation of sophisticated equipment like spectroheliographs and photoelectric detectors.

It also has an ongoing project to digitise a vast archive of historical solar images. This includes white light data, crucial for studying sunspot evolution and surface features; Calcium-K (Ca-K) data, which provides insights into the chromosphere's temperature and structure; and solar prominence data, essential for understanding these dynamic features.

Panel discussion

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The National Institute of Advanced Studies, to mark the birth centenary celebration of Dr. Raja Ramanna, is holding a panel discussion on "The relevance of Traditional wisdom in Modern science", on April 4, between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. The programme will be held at JRD Tata Auditorium, NIAS, Indian Institute of Science campus.

Timings
BENGALURU

SUNDAY, MAR. 31	
RISE 06:16	SET 18:31
RISE 23:46	SET 10:18
MONDAY, APR. 01	
RISE 06:16	SET 18:31
RISE 00:00	SET 11:14
TUESDAY, APR. 02	
RISE 06:15	SET 18:31
RISE 00:44	SET 12:13

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	35	25
Mysuru	36	23
Bengaluru	36	24

Bengaluru Today
35°C A dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm. Night also will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
34°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and uneasy. Night will be pleasant.

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THE HINDU
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The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following work.

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For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Chief Medical Superintendent / Mysuru
PUB/780/AAV/PRB/SWR/2023-24
South Western Railway-SWR SWRRLY SWRRLY

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified that, my clients have agreed to purchase the Schedule property from its owner **SMT.S.CHANDRIKA** W/o late Upendra Rao P V. residing at: No.T4, 'Hayagriva Apartments', Dattatreya Temple Road, Near BMS College of Engg, N.R.Colony, Bengaluru – 560019.

Apart from the said owner, if any other person/s have any manner of claim or interest or demand over the Schedule property or any part thereof by way of sale, lease, mortgage, gift, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, pre-emption or otherwise howsoever, they are hereby requested to file their objection/s (along with the photocopies of the documents on which they are relying), with the undersigned within **10 days** from the date of publication of this notice. Objection/s received thereafter will not be binding on my clients.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the residential property bearing Municipal No.126/1, PID No.49-58-126/1, measuring East to West 23ft and North to South 27ft, together with a building thereon, situated at Govindappa Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore and bounded on:

East By : Common passage
West By : property of Venkataramanappa
North By : Property of H.S.Gayatri
South By : Property of Nagamal

Sd/- **S.F. GOUTAM CHAND**
Advocate
GOUTAM ASSOCIATES
No.60, 2nd Floor, Kanakapura Road,
Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560 004.

FORM A
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT
(Regulation 14 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Voluntary Liquidation Process) Regulations, 2017)
FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE STAKEHOLDERS OF
WHITE LEAF SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS PRIVATE LIMITED

1	NAME OF CORPORATE PERSON	WHITE LEAF SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS PRIVATE LIMITED
2	DATE OF INCORPORATION OF CORPORATE PERSON	12/04/2012
3	AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH CORPORATE PERSON IS INCORPORATED / REGISTERED	Roc-Bangalore Ministry of Corporate Affairs
4	CORPORATE IDENTITY NUMBER / LIMITED LIABILITY IDENTITY NUMBER OF CORPORATE PERSON	U72900KA2012PTC063504
5	ADDRESS OF THE REGISTERED OFFICE AND PRINCIPAL OFFICE (IF ANY) OF CORPORATE PERSON	No. GC, Alsa Glenridge 32, Langford Road, Bangalore, Karnataka, India, 560025
6	LIQUIDATION COMMENCEMENT DATE OF CORPORATE PERSON	27.03.2024
7	NAME, ADDRESS, EMAIL ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND THE REGISTRATION NUMBER OF THE LIQUIDATOR	MR. THIRUPALGORIGE No. 87, 2nd Floor, 21st Cross, 7th Main, N.S. Palya, BTM 2nd Stage, Bangalore-560076, Karnataka, India Cell +91 94483 84064, LL +91 80 7963 4233 Email: gthirupal@gmail.com IP Registration No. IBBI/IPA-002/IP-N00016/2016-17/10030 AFA valid upto 21/05/2024
8	LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF CLAIMS	26.04.2024

Notice is hereby given that **M/s. WHITE LEAF SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS PRIVATE LIMITED** has commenced voluntary liquidation on 27.03.2024.
The stakeholders of **WHITE LEAF SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS PRIVATE LIMITED** are hereby called upon to submit a proof of their claims, on or before 26.04.2024 to the liquidator at the address mentioned against item 7.
The financial creditors shall submit their proof of claims by electronic means only. All other stakeholders may submit the proof of claims in person, by post or by electronic means.
Submission of false or misleading proofs of claim shall attract penalties.

Date : 31.03.2024
Place : Bangalore
Sd/-
Thirupal Gorige
Liquidator

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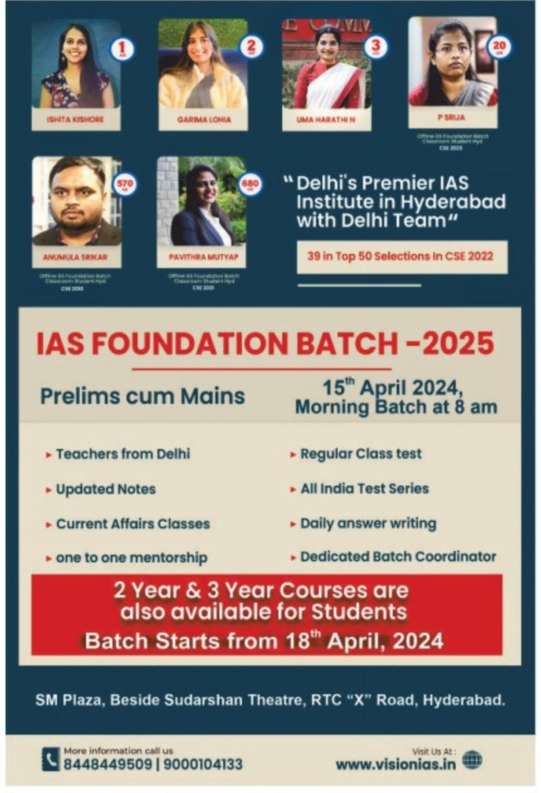

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VACANCIES

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ISSN 0971 - 751X

Finally, it is K.V. Gowtham for Kolar from Congress

With this, the party has announced candidates for all the 28 Lok Sabha constituencies in State

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After much internal turmoil and high drama, the Congress central election committee on Saturday approved the candidature of K.V. Gowtham, president of the Bengaluru Central District Congress Committee, for Kolar reserved (SC) constituency for the Lok Sabha election. With this, the Congress has announced candidates for all the 28 constituencies in Karnataka.

The AICC had to delay the announcement of the candidate for Kolar owing to factionalism in the Kolar District Congress Committee. Mr. Gowtham, former State Youth Congress and NSUI office-bearer, belongs to the SC 'left' sect. The 48-year-old is an engineer by qualification.

Suspense ends: K.V. Gowtham, Congress candidate for the Kolar Lok Sabha seat, receiving the 'B' form from KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar on Saturday.

Factionalism

Food and Civil Supplies Minister K.H. Muniyappa had lobbied hard for a ticket for his son-in-law Chikka Peddanna, which had been strongly opposed by former legislative Assembly Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar and five legislators. They had demanded that a candidate from the SC 'right' sect should be given the ticket. The faction led by Mr. Muniyappa had opposed nominating a candidate belonging to the SC 'right' sect, while demanding ticket for Mr. Peddanna.

The AICC's decision to field a "neutral" candidate who does not belong to either camps is seen as a setback for both. The Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) recommended the name of Mr. Gowtham following discussions with 'rebel' legislators from the district as well as seven-time MP Mr. Muniyappa. The discussions were led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, who is also the KPCC president.

Speaking after the announcement, Mr. Muniyappa said Mr. Peddanna's name had earlier been cleared by central leaders.

Mr. Shivakumar said, "There is no scope for groupism in the party. Discipline is more important and nobody should cross the *Lakshman rekha*. We have given clear instructions to the leaders that they have to work for the party. We have given the ticket to an ordinary party worker and all the leaders have to work for his victory. Asked about internal squabbles which could cost the Kolar seat, he said, "Everyone will work for the party." Mr. Gowtham exuded confidence that everyone will work for his victory.

Tejaswini joins Cong.; Nisha Yogeshwar too announces decision to join party

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Three days after resigning as an MLC, former journalist Tejaswini Gowda on Saturday rejoined the Congress in New Delhi in the presence of party leaders Pawan Khera and Jairam Ramesh, MP. She quit the BJP, upset over not being fielded in the Lok Sabha election.

Ms. Gowda was elected to the Council from the Legislative Assembly constituency from the BJP in 2018. She defected from the Congress and joined the BJP in 2014. Ms. Gowda was a Congress MP from 2004 to 2009. She termed her return to the grand old part as "homecoming".

"We welcome Tejaswini Gowda, an active leader in Karnataka politics, to the Congress. We have full confidence that Tejaswini ji will remain active in the coming elections," said Mr. Ramesh.

In her remarks, Ms. Gowda said, "The Congress believes in action and not just words. History is there for us to see. It's high time, and with all sincerity, I would like to work for the party. The BJP does not believe in constitutional democratic values," she alleged.

Back in its fold: Tejaswini Gowda joined Congress in the presence of party leaders Pawan Khera and Jairam Ramesh in New Delhi on Saturday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

'No objection'

In another development, Nisha Yogeshwar, daughter of the BJP MLC and former Minister C.P. Yogeshwar, has decided to join the Congress. Ms. Nisha said her father had "no objection" to her joining the Congress.

Ms. Nisha's decision would help the Congress in Channapatna to secure more votes for the party's candidate D.K. Suresh in Bengaluru Rural constituency. She met Mr. Suresh and KPCC chief and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and expressed her willingness to join the Congress.

The Channapatna Assembly segment would fall vacant if Janata Dal (Secular) leader and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy emerges victorious in the Lok Sabha elections from Mandya constituency.

'Shocked' to receive I-T notice: DKS

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar on Saturday said he had received an income tax notice though the case against him was a "settled matter". However, he did not give details of the specific case in question.

Accusing the Centre of harassing the Opposition, including Communist parties, Mr. Shivakumar alleged that the BJP was afraid of the Congress and the INDIA block.

"I too got a notice last night from the Income Tax Department, which is already a settled matter. I was shocked," Mr. Shivakumar told reporters here. There are many cases involving BJP leaders against whom no action is taken, he said.

"I don't want to specifically mention cases, including those against the incumbent Union Minister from Karnataka. But for the last four or five years, no action has been taken. No witnesses have been called, no chargesheets have been filed," Mr. Shivakumar noted.

From Page One

Invoking 'Kannadiga pride', CM slams HDD

Despite these betrayals to Karnataka, when you claimed that Modi and Shah have the solutions to all of India's problems, didn't it prick your conscience?" he asked. Referring to several State-Centre issues raised by him earlier, including devolution of taxes, he said while several southern States had questioned it, the regional party – JD(S) – in Karnataka had "betrayed Kannadigas by compromising with the opponents of our land, water, and language." Mr. Gowda, who has always championed regional causes and questioned the dominance of the Centre throughout his political career, seems to have compromised politically in his later years, Mr. Siddaramaiah said.

"Whoever may have influenced this change, the fact remains that Mr. Gowda, by aligning with the BJP for mere political gain, has let down over six-and-a-half crore Kannadigas," he said.

'Shobha filed false affidavit in 2019'

Reaching out: Rajeev Gowda, Congress candidate from the Bengaluru North Lok Sabha constituency, campaigning at Byatarayanapura in Bengaluru on Saturday.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Congress candidate from Bengaluru North Lok Sabha constituency M.V. Rajeev Gowda, on Saturday, alleged that his rival BJP candidate, Union Minister of State for Agriculture, Farmers' Welfare and Food Processing Industries Shobha Karandlaje, was involved in a ₹44-crore scam in 2014 and had filed a false affidavit during the 2019 elections when she contested from Udupi-Chikkamagaluru constituency.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who proclaims "Na khaunga, na khane dunga", inducted Ms. Karandlaje into the Ministry and protected her, he claimed. The Enforcement Directorate filed a case in 2014 under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in the High Court of Karnataka and she challenged the action of the ED by filing a petition, Mr. Gowda said.

Noting that Ms. Karandlaje was accused number 23 in the case, the Congress leader said the Modi-led government had remained silent on the case. Moreover, in 2019, she filed a false affidavit while submitting her nomination paper as the BJP candidate in the Udupi-Chikkamagaluru constituency, Mr. Gowda alleged. In 2019, during her nomination from the Udupi-Chikkamagaluru, Ms. Karandlaje listed this case in her affidavit, stating "Not applicable (private complaint before magistrate)", Mr. Gowda said. He accused Mr. Karandlaje of providing "misleading information" and violating election laws.

Cong. MLA's remark on HDK's heart procedure draws flak

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Political heat seems to be building in the Mandya Lok Sabha constituency that is set to witness a high-profile electoral battle with Janata Dal (Secular) leader and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy in the fray.

The recent heart procedure that Mr. Kumaraswamy underwent in Chennai was referred to in a cavalier fashion by Srirangapatna Congress legislator Ramesh Bandisidde Gowda at a public function in Mandya, triggering a backlash on Saturday with even Home Minister G. Parameshwara taking exception to his party colleague's statement.

"He (Mr. Kumaraswamy) gets admitted to hospital during elections. He will be in hospital for three days for the heart operation, and starts travelling the State from the fourth day. I don't know how it is possible. (Agriculture Minister) N. Cheluvarayaswamy also has the same problem as his friend (Mr. Kumaraswamy). People don't come out of the hospital for a month after a heart operation. I don't understand the new technique," Mr. Bandisidde Gowda said.

Reacting to this, Dr. Parameshwara told reporters in Bengaluru, "We should not speak about personal issues of others, whoever it may be. It is better to have self control when we speak."

Mr. Kumaraswamy's son and State JD(S) Youth Wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy said there was no need to create a gimmick before elections.

"A third operation was indeed done and we do not have to prove it to anyone. We are not seeking sympathy votes." He also pointed out that Mr. Kumaraswamy had undergone the earlier surgery a month before the 2018 Assembly elections.

The former Melkote legislator C.S. Puttaraju said such statements do not bring honour to anyone, and asked Mr. Bandisidde Gowda to apologise for the "shameless remarks".

Excise Dept. confiscates liquor worth ₹1.13 crore

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a major pre-poll seizure on Saturday, the Excise Department confiscated 12,191.4 litres of Indian Made Liquor worth ₹1,13,80,101 at KSBCL depot, Madanayakanalli, in Chickballapur parliamentary constituency in Bengaluru Urban district.

The Election Commission has made total seizures worth over ₹65.12 crore since March 16 when the model code of conduct came into force in Karnataka. This includes cash, liquor, drugs, and precious metals.

Four MPs who were denied ticket are among 'star campaigners' of BJP

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The names of four incumbent MPs of the BJP, who have been denied re-nomination by the party, feature in the list of 40 star campaigners released for Karnataka by the party. Among the prominent names missing from the list are the former BJP Minister K.S. Eshwarappa and six-time MP for Uttara Kannada Anantkumar Hegde.

The list, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was released on Saturday.

Yatnal, Preetam Gowda

Union Minister and MP for Chitradurga A. Narayanswamy, Bengaluru North MP and former Chief Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda, Dakshin Kannada MP Nalin Kumar Kateel, and Mysuru MP Prathap Simha, all of whom have been denied the ticket to contest, are in the list of star campaigners. Another senior leader and Vijayapura MLA Basannagouda Patil Yatnal, who has been critical about developments in the party and airing his views publicly, and the former MLA for Hassan Preetham Gowda, who has expressed his views against the party's tie-up with the JD(S), are also in the list.

Mr. Eshwarappa has announced his contest from Shivamogga as an Independent after his son K.E. Kantesh was denied the ticket from Haveri while Mr. Hegde is learnt to be upset with the denial of ticket.

D.V. Sadananda Gowda, Nalin Kumar Kateel, and Prathap Simha are among the 'star campaigners'.

Besides Mr. Modi, BJP president J.P.Nadda, Union Ministers Amit Shah, Nirmala Sitharaman, Rajnath Singh, S. Jaishankar, Smriti Irani, and Nitin Gadkari, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanatha, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswas Sharma, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, and former Karnataka Chief Ministers B.S. Yediyurappa, Basavaraj Bommai, and Jagadish Shettar are part of the list.

Meanwhile, Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar, who is contesting from Thiruvananthapuram, has been named among the 27 members for the BJP's election manifesto committee, representing Karnataka.

A 40-day 'Thank you Modi' campaign in Karnataka was launched by the BJP to highlight the contribution of the Narendra Modi-led government to Karnataka. "The campaign will identify one or two programmes of the Modi government that benefitted Karnataka, and videos would be made to introduce them to the public," BJP general secretary V. Suneel Kumar said, releasing the first of the videos on smoke-free kitchen.

Shah to visit State

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will kickstart his election campaign in Karnataka on April 2 from Channapatna where a roadshow of leaders of both BJP and Janata Dal (Secular) has been planned.

According to BJP general secretary V. Suneel Kumar, Mr. Shah will be taking part in party programmes, including conventions of Shakti Kendra volunteers from Bengaluru North, South, Central, and Rural constituencies along with Chickballapur at the Palace Ground here. Later, he will be interacting with leaders from Chickballapur, Tumakuru, Davangere, and Chitradurga constituencies. He said: "Election campaigning will gather pace with Mr. Shah's arrival in the State."

BHARAT COKING COAL LIMITED
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BCCL
Bharat Coking Coal Limited
Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

NOTICE

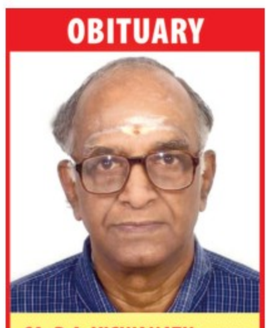
All the tenders* issued by Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of BCCL **www.bcclweb.in**, Coal India Limited (CIL) e-procurement portal **https://coalindiatenders.nic.in** and Central Public Procurement Portal **https://eprocure.gov.in.** In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal **https://gem.gov.in.**

*This is applicable to all Open (Domestic / Global) Tenders issued through e-procurement portal of CIL.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

OBITUARY



CA. R.A. VISWANATH (83 YRS)
Founder Partner
Anand & Kalyan
Died & Cremated on
26.03.2024
10th day Ceremony @ ARUMBAKKAM
98410 26426
98410 54702 / 044 2363 5735

NATA2024
NATIONAL APTITUDE TEST IN ARCHITECTURE
Council of Architecture
(A Statutory Authority of Government of India under the Architects Act, 1972)

NOTIFICATION FOR CONDUCT OF NATA-2024

THE REGISTRATION FOR **NATA 2024** HAS COMMENCED FROM 01.03.2024 AT WWW.NATA.IN. THE CANDIDATES DESIROUS TO TAKE ADMISSION INTO 1ST YEAR OF 5-YEAR B.ARCH. DEGREE PROGRAM ARE ADVISED TO REGISTER THEMSELVES FOR **NATA-2024**.

Who can appear for NATA:
i) PASSED OR APPEARING IN 10+1 EXAMINATION WITH PCM SUBJECTS
ii) PASSED OR APPEARING IN 10+2 EXAMINATION WITH PCM SUBJECTS
iii) PASSED OR APPEARING IN 10+3 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION WITH MATHEMATICS

VALIDITY OF NATA - 2024 SCORE:
Score shall be valid for **two** academic years from the year in which appeared.
Maximum attempts permitted per academic year: **03 nos.**

FOR ELIGIBILTY CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO B.ARCH AND LIST OF INSTITUTIONS ADMITTING STUDENTS TO B.ARCH PROGRAMME BASED ON NATA SCORE IS AVAILABLE ON **WWW.NATA.IN**

For more Information contact:
Email: nataexam2024@gmail.com **Help Desk Phone:** 08045549467

New Delhi
Dated: 31.03.2024
Registrar

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‘This poll is about preserving secular state’

Kerala CM says a diverse coalition of believers and non-believers won India’s freedom and founded a secular state; he criticises BJP-RSS combine’s politics of ‘violence and hatred’ and adds that Congress ‘big brother attitude’ is an impediment in bringing secular, regional forces on same platform

G. Anand
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has underscored that the upcoming Lok Sabha election is a referendum on “preserving India’s secular democracy” and little else.

In an e-mail interview with *The Hindu* on Friday, Mr. Vijayan articulated the pivotal nature of the 2024 Lok Sabha election ahead of the launch of his 24-day tour through Kerala’s 20 Lok Sabha constituencies on Saturday.

Mr. Vijayan said it was reductive to depict the Left Democratic Front’s (LDF) staunch resistance to the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act as a “question about minority or majority”. Instead, the “question is about secularism”, he added.

The CPI(M) veteran pointed out that a broad and diverse coalition of believers and non-believers won India’s freedom and founded a secular state. He said the Constitution did not envisage religion as a criterion for citizenship.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will embark on a 24-day campaign trail across Kerala on Saturday. THULASI KAKKAT

‘Defections a worry’

Mr. Vijayan said the Congress’s disintegration was not in the interest of the CPI(M)-led LDF. However, pursuing a soft Hindutva line would not keep the more extreme BJP from the door. Only an uncompromising position against communal politics could defeat the BJP, he said.

Mr. Vijayan said defections from secular and democratic parties empowered the right wing, which was disconcerting.

Mr. Vijayan said Congress MP Rahul Gandhi’s candidature from Wayanad would have no effect on Kerala in 2024. The people of Wayanad would evaluate him for his work as an MP, which was hardly any. He said Mr. Gandhi’s constituents were sceptical about the latter’s “presence and performance” in the Lok Sabha on issues such as human-wildlife conflict, CAA, and Ayodhya. “If the Congress is keen on fighting the BJP, it would contest directly against BJP candidates. What message are you giving to the Indian public if even your topmost leaders are reluctant to fight the BJP?” Mr. Vijayan asked.

He said the Congress, as the biggest party in the Opposition, seemed unable to bring secular and regional forces on the same platform. “Its big brother attitude was an impediment,” Mr. Vijayan said.

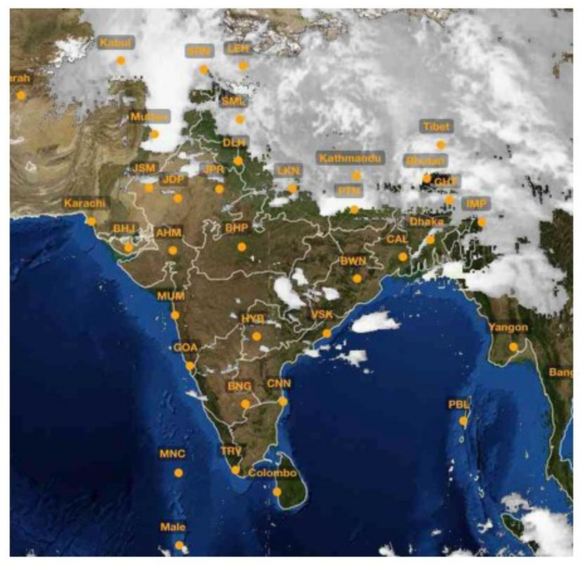
BJP’s actions instil fear

Mr. Vijayan rejected the BJP’s accusation that the LDF had sown seeds of fear in the minority community to reap electoral dividends. “It is the BJP-RSS combine’s politics of violence and hatred, and policies of discrimination and profiling, such as the CAA, which are instilling fear in various sections of the Indian society,” he said.

Mr. Vijayan said the Congress-BJP recriminatory campaign, often bordering on the personal, would have no traction among voters. “They are barking up the wrong tree,” he said. ‘Nava Kerala Sadas’, the government’s outreach programme, had stirred people to question the Congress-led United Democratic Front’s jarring silence about the Union government’s discrimination against Kerala, he said.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Chhattisgarh, east Madhya Pradesh and Vidarbha

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	34	33.6	22.2	Kozhikode	—	36.6	27.8
Ahmedabad	—	37.1	24.5	Kurnool	—	41.5	28.2
Aizawl	—	32.0	20.5	Lucknow	—	37.3	22.8
Allahabad	—	40.7	24.1	Madurai	—	38.4	24.6
Bengaluru	—	36.6	23.2	Mangaluru	—	34.5	25.5
Bhopal	1	37.7	23.8	Mumbai	—	32.7	24.1
Bhubaneswar	—	37.0	25.3	Mysuru	—	36.4	22.0
Chandigarh	12.4	34.3	18.1	New Delhi	—	35.2	21.8
Chennai	—	35.1	26.3	Patna	—	35.5	24.6
Coimbatore	—	37.6	24.4	Port Blair	—	32.5	25.2
Dehradun	3.6	32.9	18.2	Puducherry	—	35.0	26.3
Gangtok	0.1	18.6	13.6	Pune	—	38.7	24.6
Goa	—	33.2	25.9	Raipur	—	39.5	27.0
Guwahati	—	32.8	21.0	Ranchi	—	35.2	21.2
Hubballi	—	39.0	22.0	Shillong	0.2	20.7	12.2
Hyderabad	—	39.4	26.2	Shimla	20	16.0	6.6
Imphal	—	25.2	16.5	Srinagar	30	15.9	6.8
Jaipur	—	37.2	24.3	Thiruvananthapuram	—	36.2	25.8
Kochi	—	33.8	28.4	Tiruchi	—	38.8	25.4
Kohima	—	21.8	11.2	Vijayawada	—	38.7	25.2
Kolkata	—	36.2	27.4	Visakhapatnam	—	32.5	26.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	5	33	.18	177	159	
Bengaluru	10	17	.23	143	163	
Chennai	7	6	.64	48	48	
Delhi	.24	.83	.61	308	221	
Hyderabad	3	.30	.39	64	123	
Kolkata	.11	.19	.23	56	79	
Lucknow	.25	8	.24	204	123	
Mumbai	.72	.46	.45	76	138	
Pune	109	143	113	79	67	
Visakhapatnam	.12	.43	.33	46	106	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Byrnihat, Assam recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 325 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 28

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Decision on April 3, says Sumalatha

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The keenly watched political move of Independent MP Sumalatha Ambareesh, which could impact the equations in Mandya, will be announced on April 3.

“I will announce my decision on April 3 at a public meeting in Mandya after consulting with my well-wishers,” Ms. Sumalatha told presspersons here after addressing leaders and followers from Mandya who had gathered at her residence on Saturday. The actor-turned-politician is miffed over being denied the ticket from Mandya from the BJP. The seat has gone the way of the BJP’s ally JD(S), which has fielded the former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy from the Vokkaliga heartland. Earlier, addressing the gathering, Ms. Sumalatha, who defeated Nikhil Kumaraswamy in a high-pitched and hard-fought battle in 2019, thanked people of Mandya for supporting her. Stating that BJP leaders made efforts to retain the Mandya seat for the party, she said, “I was confident of the BJP retaining the seat. I had suggested to the BJP to retain the seat to enable the party to grow. I had not sought the seat for myself. However, in the current situation, I need to take a decision to protect the interests of those who stood by me.” When asked if the BJP had given the assurance of protecting her, she said: “The Central leaders, as well as (BJP State president) B.Y. Vijayendra, have promised me of a bright future and not to be concerned. They have also promised to take care of the workers.” When asked if she had received an invitation from any party, she said: “I am in touch with all parties. I am getting phone calls.”

Congress veteran Shamanur’s misogynistic remark irks many, including Saina and DKS

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A derisive comment by Shamanur Shivashankarappa, 92-yer-old Congress patriarch, about Gayathri Siddeshwara, the BJP candidate for the Davangere Lok Sabha constituency, has drawn flak from many, including badminton player Saina Nehwal as well as KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar.

Mr. Shivashankarappa had said that Ms. Siddeshwara was no leader and did not deserve the votes of the people. She had never ventured outside the kitchen and “knows only how to cook”, the leader had said at a campaign meeting in Davangere on Friday.

Shamanur Shivashankarappa

Ms. Nehwal, who is also a BJP member, took to social media platform X on Saturday and said that the misogynistic remark was “really upsetting”. She said the sexist jibe “is least expected from a party that says Ladki Hoon Lad Sakti Hoon”.

Meanwhile, Mr. Shivakumar took to X and said, “I strongly condemn any statement that remotely reeks of sexism and misogyny, coming from anyone. The Congress party’s women-centric guarantees in Karnataka ... are a testament to our ideology that we honour women as an empowered embodiment of progress & prosperity. Both my party and I strongly believe and support women as equal partners in the progress of the country, and no regressive statement can ever change that.” Ms. Siddeshwara countered by saying the nonagenarian was old enough to be her grandfather and that she had regard for him. “Women are making their mark in every field nowadays, but it seems he was unaware of such developments.” She also said that she was no stranger to politics as her husband, G.M. Siddeshwara, has been a Union Minister and father-in-law G. Mallikarjunappa has been a member of Parliament for several terms.

‘Nine Guarantees’ unveiled

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

A.P. Congress president Y.S. Sharmila on Saturday unveiled the ‘Nine Guarantees’ of the party and exhorted cadres to work together for the victory of its candidates in the election.

THE SPECIAL OFFICER AND COMPETENT AUTHORITY,
(UNDER KPIDFE - IMA & OTHER SCAM)
3rd Floor, Podium Block, V.V Tower, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru-560001

No. SPLOCA/ADM/GEN/03/2023-24 **ದಿನಾಂಕ : 28.03.2024**

NOTIFICATION

Depositors who have already filed claims against the Injaz International, a fraudulent company, are required to submit additional documents to support their claims.

The prescribed applications required for submission of additional documents can be obtained from this office and filled in applications along with all supportive documents to be submitted to the Special Officer and Competent Authority, (IMA and other KPIDFE Scam) 4th Floor, Visveswaraiah Podium Block, Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru – 560001 is allowed from **04.04.2024** to **04.05.2024.** Further, follow the instructions given below to submit the supplementary documents and submission of the prescribed documents is mandatory.

Documents To Be Produced For Verification:

1.Original ID-Aadhar, PAN/Epic with xerox for attestation.
2.Bank pass sheets 2 months prior to date of investment to till date in Heera group of companies., duly attested by the bank manager to be furnished,
3.Copy of passbook with copy of pages showing KYC.
4.Bonds / Agreements / Notarized Affidavits.
5.General power of attorney in the case of Authorized Agent and statutory documents shall be produced in the original.
6.Where copies are allowed as support documents, either ink signed attested clear xerox copy of every page shall be provided or original shall be provided alongside xerox copy for attestation by concerned officer. Scans / WhatsApp copies are not acceptable.

Note : Special Procedure

1.Nominee or Legal Heir or Members of the immediate family - Parents / Spouse / Children, due to illness or disability or death of the depositor.
2. Members of the extended family due to illness or disability or death of the depositor and absence or disability or death of Nominee or Legal Heir or Members of the immediate family, provided Depositor/ Nominee / Legal Heir has provided signed authorization or death certificate is available.
3. Parents of minor children
4. Power of Attorney Holder duly authorized for the specific purposes with reasons.
5. In case of death of the depositor Death Certificate and survival certificate from tahsildar/Mandal Revenue officer / Competent court.
6. Passbook issued by FE

Special Notice :

1. Applicants/depositors who have already submitted claim applications should get the claim application form at the office given below along with the supplementary documents and submit it by attaching the documents.
2. Before submission of supplementary documents, it is mandatory to show acknowledgment copy for already submitted claim applications.
3. Applicants/depositors are not allowed to submit fresh applications.
4. Applications are available at : Special Officer and Competent Authority, (IMA and other KPIDFE Scam) 4th Floor, Visveswaraiah Podium Block, Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru – 560001.
5. For more details, contact the office of Special Officer and Competent Authority, (IMA and other KPIDFE Scam) 4th Floor, Visveswaraiah Podium Block, Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru – 560001.

Sd/-
The Special Officer & Competent Authority
(Under KPIDFE - IMA & Other Scam)
Bengaluru, Karnataka

DIPR/CP/4412 /Zen/2023-24

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that our clients **Mr.Reuben DSouza S/o. Mr.Reggie DSouza and Ms.Ringkila J Tainamei D/o. Mr. Joseph Tainamei** are intending to purchase the schedule property mentioned hereunder from **Mr.J.Raymond Kumar S/o. Late.S.Jayaraj and Mrs.Leena J W/o. Mr.J. Thomas Raju** any person/s, company, Bank having any sort of objection or are having any right, title, interest or any type of claim over the scheduled property is hereby called upon to file their objections/claims what so ever along with documentary proof on or before **7 days** from the date of publication of this notice with the under mentioned advocate failing which; our client shall proceed and complete the sale transaction with the above stated person.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the property bearing **Site No.27c,** Katha No.21/1/27C, situated at **Kada Agrahara Village, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore,** measuring East to West 51 Feet and North to South 30 Feet, in all measuring **1530 Square Feet,** and bounded on the: **East by : Road, West by : Site No.42A, North by : Site No.27B; South by : Site No.27D**

C.K.V.K. LAW ASSOCIATES
Mr. VENKATESH CHANDRAN M.A., L.L.B.
Advocates & Legal Consultants
Bangalore-43. M: 9845846428, 080-48658774

PUBLIC NOTICE

TAKE NOTICE THAT my clients **1.Mr.Arun B Jain,** S/o. Mr.Bhikamchand Jain, **2.Mr.Rakesh Bhikamchand Jain,** S/o Mr.Bhikamchand Jain and **3. Mr.Deepak Kumar,** S/o Mr.Bhikamchand Jain are intending to purchase entire building constructed on **Site bearing former No.334** in Palace Orchards, Now No.334/21, XIV Cross, Sadashivanagar, 45th Corporation Division, Bangalore consists of Ground and First Floors separately owned by **Mr. C. Sundaram,** S/o. Mr. M. S. Chockalingam Chettiar and **Mrs. C. Muthu** W/o S.Chockalingam respectively, hereinafter referred to as the “Schedule Property” and being more fully described in the Schedule hereunder.

Any person / firm / institution / company / Bank / financial institution having any claim / right / interest over the schedule Property is hereby required to intimate in writing to the undersigned within **seven (07) days** from the date of publication of this notice of his/her/their claim if any with all supporting documents failing which the transaction shall be completed without reference to such claims and such claims if any in future shall not be binding on my clients.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of entire building constructed on **Site bearing former No.334** in Palace Orchards, Now No.334/21, XIV Cross, Sadashivanagar, 45th Corporation Division, Bangalore, **measuring East to West 90 feet and North 60 feet, together with RCC roofed structures** consists of Ground and First Floors thereon and bounded on the:- **East. : Site No.321, West : Road North : Site No.333, South : Site No.335.**

M/s.RASHI LEGAL
Advocates and Legal Consultants,
No.B2-1250/51, 'Manu Teja Towers', A. Dasarahalli, Magadi Main Road, Bangalore - 560 079.
M-9916559198

EDUCATION HUB

A Business Initiative

International Institute of Business Studies (IIBS, NAAC A Graded, Affiliated to Bengaluru City University) Celebrated Founder’s Day, LUMINANCE 2024

On the Birthday of Dr.Jay Prakash, CM, the IIBS in Bengaluru celebrated its 16th Founders Day, LUMINANCE 2024, with great fervor and enthusiasm. The event marked a significant milestone in IIBS’s journey of excellence in education and was attended by distinguished guests, faculty, students, parents, and stakeholders. LUMINANCE 2024 served as a reflection to the institution’s commitment to nurturing talent and fostering innovation in business education. The program was inaugurated by Dr. Ananda Kumar, Registrar (Evaluation) of Bengaluru City University, who commended IIBS’s contributions to the field of education. Dr. Ritika Sinha, Chairperson and Associate Professor at Bengaluru City University, and Dr. Gunjan Kumari, Secretary of the Smt. B Devi Charitable Trust, graced the occasion as esteemed guests. The celebration also witnessed the unveiling of a souvenir commemorating IIBS’s 16 years’ journey of excellence and the release of the 2023 Alumni Magazine, showcasing the achievements of alumni who have made significant strides in their respective fields. The event featured cultural performances by both students and faculty. The festivities concluded with a cake-cutting ceremony followed by a sumptuous dinner.

CHRIST (Deemed to be University) Bengaluru Central campus hosted and witnessed a very unique event in Insurance Education in the country

Recently Secretary General of Insurance Institute of India Mr SN Satpathy along with the officials from III, Mumbai, visited the Bangalore campus to confer the Excellence in Insurance Education award to Christ University in the Main Auditorium. Insurance education touches a new milestone. The event ‘Sahasra Bimayaan’ marked the culmination of a landmark achievement by any varsity in India. The Department of Professional studies under the school of commerce finance and accountancy created a record of completing 1000 licentiate holders of Insurance Institute of India. Students and Alumni received awards under various categories on this joyous occasion. The VC in his address appreciated the commendable achievement by students and urged them to work together as a team with industry to better the current insurance penetration. Dr Biju Toms, Director School of Commerce, mentioned the future plans of the varsity to scale up the ongoing Suraksha Chakra project to a Pan India program. The event was attended by special guests spanning the wide spectrum of Insurance Sector. Prof Jossy Peter, insurance coordinator of the department who moderated the awards ceremony shared the ambitious dream of connecting rural India through insurance. Prof Soumya the HOD of Professional studies highlighted the significance and impactful role of Financial Literacy Program and Insurance Literacy Program of the campus in supporting nation building through the students community.

Krupanidhi Group of Institutions (KGI) launches the soul of the Institution Element 7

Recently KGI Annual Cultural fest Element 7 was launched in their Campus. The Event launch witnessed live Band Vortex followed by a Students flash mob adding flavour to the cultural extravaganza. The Cultural fest is Supposed to take place shortly at KGI, Bengaluru. Around 2500 students were present for the launch. The Launch was indeed a Grand success with the extraordinary line up making the event a Big success on its 5th Flagship Year. The Event includes various competitions such as dance, singing, mime, fashion-show, beat boxing Live concert and DJ Night. Passes for the same are already available. Artists such as Shilpa Rao, Teri Miko , Johnnie Ernest , VJ infinity and a major line up follows.

International Women’s Day celebrations at Soundarya Institute of Management and Science College; interaction with achievers

An interactive session was held with women achievers on the occasion of International Women’s Day celebrations at Soundarya Institute of Management and Science. Noted Kannada Cine actor Priyanka Upendra inaugurated the celebrations. Dr Prateeksha Keerthan, the Managing Trustee of the Institute who presided over the function, said the programme was inspiring as well as intellectually vibrant with a lot of originality in content. College Principal Dr B. A. Vasu, CEO of Soundarya Educational Trust,Mr. Keerthan Kumar, Manager- Corporate Relations Ramya Sheshadri , faculty, teachers and students participated in the celebrations in large number.

From Page One

CAA Rules silent on fate of rejected applicants

Lakhs of people belonging to the Scheduled Caste community migrated from Bangladesh (earlier East Pakistan) before and after the 1971 war with Pakistan. Many came without any papers but subsequently acquired all documents proving their Indian citizenship, such as passports and voter identity cards.

Ms. Thakur, a Matua leader nominated to the Rajya Sabha by the Trinamool Congress in February, said that the Rules were akin to making people slaves. "No one has applied for CAA here. Even Union Minister Santanu Thakur has not applied yet, his ancestors are from Bangladesh. If an application is rejected, people may end up in detention centres," she said.

According to the Rules, the applicant must declare the country they belong to along with their "date of entry into India", and upload on the citizenship portal any of the nine documents issued by government authorities in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh to support their claim. This means that though the CAA was envisaged for undocumented migrants belonging to the six communities from the three neighbouring countries, the Rules indicate that documents are essential.

Four receive Bharat Ratna posthumously

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP national president J.P. Nadda, Congress president and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar were among those who were present at the ceremony in the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

"As the ninth Prime Minister of India, Shri P. V. Narasimha Rao led far-reaching economic reforms. Earlier, in his youth, he had taken an active part in the freedom struggle, especially against the misrule and oppression in the Nizam-ruled Hyderabad," the official handle of the Rashtrapati Bhavan said in a post on X.

Recalling the late Charan Singh's role during the freedom struggle in another post on X, President Murmu said, "His contribution to zamindari abolition and land reforms, and his deep understanding of the economy, especially rural and agricultural economy are respectfully remembered."

President Murmu said Dr. Swaminathan played a major role in making India self-sufficient in food production.

Recalling the simple living and selfless actions of Karpoori Thakur, the official handle of Rashtrapati Bhavan said: "Working tirelessly to improve the lives of the disadvantaged people, he commanded high regard and had earned the honorific, '*Jan-Nayak*'."

Chargesheet filed against *NewsClick*

Under Section 43 D of the UAPA, the time granted to file a chargesheet in a case extends from 90 days to up to 180 days. In the case in hand, the court granted three extensions to the special cell of the Delhi Police to file the chargesheet.

The matter pertains to an FIR registered by the Delhi Police against the news portal, under Sections 13, 16, 17, 18 and 22 of the anti-terror UAPA pertaining to unlawful activities for raising of funds for "a terrorist act". They were also booked for threatening witness under Sections 153 A and 120 B of the IPC.

The FIR was registered days after *The New York Times* published a report on August 8, 2023, that the portal received money from American businessman Neville Roy Singham, an "active member of the propaganda department of the Communist Party of China" to distort the map of India by projecting Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh as disputed territory. The police said the accused received foreign funds of ₹115 crore.

Zakaat helps free jail inmates during Ramzan

"We have been active since 2007-08 and have seen cases in which family members have no idea of the whereabouts of the prison inmate. It is only much later, maybe after weeks or months, that they get to know that they are in jail. The situation is so bad that families cannot even afford to pay ₹500. The aim and object of our organisation is to help everyone. Of our varied activities, we also work as facilitators for prisoner release," he says.

Like Ms. Pasha, Ghazala Ahmed (name changed upon request), an entrepreneur, too has been earmarking a part of her *zakaat* funds for this cause. She says that Islam prescribes the freeing of prisoners within the legal system, and it is considered an important act. "Usually, people give *zakaat* to madrasas and those in need, especially poor relatives. But the goodness here is twofold: a religious injunction is being fulfilled, and we help a family in dire need.

The All India Milli Council, another socio-religious group, has secured the release of 68 inmates lodged in prisons in and around Hyderabad, since last year, according to its office-bearer Mufti Omar Abedeen Qasmi Madani.

ED takes statement of Delhi Minister Kailash Gahlot in excise policy case

Gahlot was among those who drafted policy; AAP leader Atishi says the questioning is part of attempt by BJP to break AAP as it could not defeat the party the democratic way; BJP expresses shock at the alleged involvement of a 'silent Minister'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday recorded the statement of Delhi Minister Kailash Gahlot in connection with the excise policy case, in which the agency arrested Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Mr. Gahlot was one of the Ministers who had drafted the excise policy. He reached the ED headquarters around 11.45 a.m. and was questioned for about five hours.

After recording his statement, Mr. Gahlot told presspersons that he answered whatever questions he was asked and that there was no cross-questioning. "I have never been part of the Goa election campaign and I am unaware of what happened," he said.

He confirmed that AAP leader and accused in the case, Vijay Nair, lived in the bungalow allotted to him at Civil Lines. "The government bungalow was allotted to me but I have always stayed in my private residence in Vasant Kunj because my wife and kids didn't want to move from there," he said, refuting allegations of corruption in the matter.

Detailed inquiry: Delhi Minister Kailash Gahlot speaks to the media after appearing before the ED for questioning in connection with the excise policy case, in New Delhi on Saturday. ANI

The ED's chargesheet mentioned that some meetings related to the excise policy happened at Mr. Gahlot's residence.

Reacting to the questioning of Mr. Gahlot, senior AAP leader Atishi said it was part of a continued attempt by the BJP to break the party as it could not defeat the AAP the democratic way. "Today it was Mr. Gahlot, tomorrow it will be me or Saurabh Bharadwaj or other elected AAP representatives. It is all an effort to break the party by using the probe agencies to make false cases," she said.

The BJP said that Mr. Gahlot was a comparatively silent Minister in the AAP government and that it was beyond shocking that his role was being probed. "The people of Delhi now believe that all of AAP's MLAs are inundated in corruption," said Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachedva.

The ED had earlier summoned the AAP's Goa unit chief Amit Palekar and some of his party colleagues from the State for questioning at its Panjim office, after it arrested Mr. Kejriwal on March 21.

On the agency's request, a special court on Thursday extended Mr. Kejriwal's remand till April 1. He was the fourth AAP leader arrested in the excise policy case, the others being former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, Rajya Sabha Member Sanjay Singh and the party's former communications incharge, Mr. Nair.

The ED had also arrested Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) legislator K. Kavitha on March 15. Subsequently, it alleged that she and a few others had conspired with the top AAP leaders, including Mr. Kejriwal and Mr. Sisodia, to get favours in the formulation and implementation of the liquor policy. The agency accused her of being involved in paying ₹100 crore in advance to the AAP leaders as illegal gratification.

The agency has so far arrested 16 accused persons and attached properties worth ₹128.79 crore in the excise policy case.

INDIA rally is to save democracy, says Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The "maha rally" being organised by the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) at the capital's Ramlila Maidan on Sunday is not aimed at protecting one person, the Congress said on Saturday, emphasising that the event was focussed on saving the Constitution and democracy.

Posters sporting the slogan "*Main bhi Kejriwal* (I am also Kejriwal)" can be seen at Ramlila Maidan, as part of a campaign being run by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) since the arrest of its national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

However, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said that the "strong message" being sent out from the rally to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Lok Kalyan Marg residence was that the BJP-led government's "time is up".

However, the BJP claimed that the people of Delhi were shocked to see that the AAP had stooped to such a level that it was seeking protection from the very people it had called corrupt.

ED must probe 'direct nexus' between BJP and 'South lobby', says AAP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday said it has found "another link" between the witnesses in the alleged Delhi excise scam and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and has demanded that the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which is currently investigating the case, should also probe the links between the "South lobby" and the ruling party if it claims to be an "independent body".

According to Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy – the father of Raghava Magunta Reddy, who was arrested by the ED in connection with the case – was fielded by the BJP's ally, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), in the upcoming Lok Sabha election, thus

Atishi

proving a "direct nexus" between the BJP and the "South lobby".

"Magunta Reddy said in two statements that there was no discussion between him and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal regarding the excise policy, but after his son's arrest, he succumbed and gave a third statement against the CM. His son Raghava Magunta also did not mention the CM's name in six statements, but issued a seventh statement against him, and after being turned into a government witness, managed to secure bail," Mr. Bharadwaj said.

"The ED should also investigate Magunta Reddy and Raghav Magunta's direct association with the BJP. They will find details of their mutual phone calls dating back years," he added.

Delhi Minister Atishi said that after the "exposition" of how Sarath Reddy, the director of Aurobindo Pharma, became an approver in the case and then donated money in the form of electoral bonds to the BJP, this was another "big revelation".

A close observation of the probe reveals that until statements against the CM are obtained, every witness may have been "intimidated", Ms. Atishi added.

Congress targets Centre, BJP over CBI closure report in aviation corruption case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Targeting the Narendra Modi-led government and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over the Central Bureau of Investigation's closure report in a 2017 corruption case involving Air India during former Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel's tenure, the Congress on Saturday held a press conference with a washing machine and detergent powder to underscore how "stains" against politicians are "washed away" the moment they join the BJP or become a part of its alliance.

Eight months ago, Mr. Patel joined the Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) that is part of the BJP-led coalition in Maharashtra.

Addressing a press conference, Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said the ruling party's "fully automatic washing machine" works on the principle – "join BJP, case closed".

Pawan Khera holds a T-shirt next to a washing machine during a press conference in New Delhi on Saturday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Giving a "live demo", the Congress leader put a heavily stained T-shirt into the machine and after switching it on, a sparking white T-shirt was brought out.

Mr. Khera claimed that the "BJP washing machine costs over ₹8,500 crore" – the money that the ruling party got through electoral bonds – and it is effective in cleaning all types of "stains of corruption" when used with "Modi washing powder".

The Congress claimed that there are, at least, 21 important leaders who have been whitewashed "clean" after the saffron party made allegations of corruption and illegality against them.

Many countries yet to fully implement steps to prevent misuse of virtual assets, says FATF

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog, has found that many countries are yet to fully implement its requirements aimed at preventing misuse of virtual assets and virtual asset service providers (VASPs).

Virtual assets (crypto assets) refer to "any digital representation of value that can be digitally traded, transferred or used for payment". The FATF plenary had in February 2023 agreed on a road map to strengthen the implementation of its standards on virtual assets and VASPs. Recently, it carried out a survey on the current levels of implementation and has now published a paper on the "Recommendation 15 by FATF Members and Jurisdictions with Materially Important VASP Activity".

"Following a 12-month process to collect and evaluate information, the FATF is publishing a table which sets out the status of implementation of Recommendation 15 by FATF members and other jurisdictions with the most materially important VASP activity. This table is based on the work of the FATF's Virtual Assets Contact Group members as well as the extensive input by the FATF Global Network of FATF members and FATF-Style regional bodies," it has said.

The FATF also had consultations with representatives of the private sector,

Virtual assets refer to 'any digital representation of value that can be used for payment'

besides the virtual assets and VASP community.

The study, which involves 58 FATF and non-FATF jurisdictions, found that India has already conducted a risk assessment covering virtual assets and VASPs.

Although it has explicitly prohibited the use of virtual assets and VASPs, it is compliant on issues such as enactment of legislation/regulation requiring VASPs to be registered or licensed and application of Anti-money Laundering/Counter-Terrorism Financing measures.

India, a member country, has conducted a supervisory inspection or included VASPs in its current inspection plan; has taken enforcement action or other supervisory action against VASPs; and has passed or enacted the travel rule for VASPs. The FATF is yet to evaluate and rate India's performance with respect to the revised standards on virtual assets and VASPs.

The countries which have explicitly prohibited the use of virtual assets and VASPs are China, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, while it is in progress in Seychelles and Indonesia.

"The table includes all FATF members plus 20 jurisdictions with materially important VASP activity. These jurisdictions were identified based on two criteria: trading volume and user base, based on open-source datasets from January to December 2022 and cross-checked against data from blockchain analytics companies," said the FATF.

It added: "It is important to note that large-scale trend data related to virtual assets is difficult to obtain, incomplete, and may change rapidly. This table provides a snapshot in time of jurisdictions that are identified as having materially important VASP activities as well as jurisdictions that are FATF members."

Listing the reasons for issuing the table, the FATF said as virtual assets were inherently international and borderless, any failure to regulate VASPs in one jurisdiction could have serious global implications.

Delhi Bar Council leaders flay criminal laws

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Expressing serious concerns over the implementation of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, the vice-chairman, secretary, and two members of the Bar Council of Delhi (BCD), in a letter to Home Minister Amit Shah, have urged him not to implement them.

In the letter, they objected to the extension of the police remand period from 15 days to 60-90 days in the new laws, among others.

They also maintained that the police cannot be given such free hand, since it may lead to a Police Raj rather than a rule of law as per the Constitution.

Rajnath Singh to head BJP's manifesto committee

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president J.P. Nadda on Saturday notified the setting up of the party's manifesto committee for the Lok Sabha election. The committee will be headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Piyush Goyal will be the conveners of the committee. The Chief Ministers of four States – Bhupendra Patel of Gujarat, Himanta Biswa Sarma of Assam, Mohan Yadav of Madhya Pradesh, and Vishnu Deo Sai of Chhattisgarh – are members of the 27-member committee.

So are senior leaders including Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Vasundhara Raje.

Suggestions from public

The BJP had in January set off vehicles across the country to collect suggestions from the public on what the party should include in its election manifesto.

In 2019, the BJP had promised the setting up of a mission for tap water connections in all households, which resulted in the *'har ghar jal'* (water to every house), once voted back to power.

In Bengal, Left seeks to iron out differences between allies

Differences have emerged over the Coochbehar and Purulia seats, with both the Congress and All India Forward Bloc looking to contest them; it also has the challenge of accommodating ISF

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Standing together: Left Front chairperson Biman Basu campaigning for Congress candidate Pradip Bhattacharya in North Kolkata on Saturday. DEBASISH BHADURI

Left Front chairperson Biman Basu on Saturday joined senior Congress leader and Kolkata Uttar Lok Sabha candidate Pradip Bhattacharya as the Congress nominee began his election campaign from Gandhi Bhavan in the Beleghata area of West Bengal.

Mr. Basu said the Left Front and the Congress are united as a third alternative against the Trinamool Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

"We want similar campaigns for all the constituencies. Those against the BJP and the Trinamool should come together," the Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader said.

The CPI(M)-led Left Front has announced candidates for 23 Lok Sabha constituencies in West Bengal and the Congress has fielded candidates for seven. For 12 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal, neither of the two has announced any candidate.

Differences have emerged over the Coochbehar and Purulia seats. The Congress and the All India Forward Bloc (AIFB) – a constituent of the Left Front – have both fielded candidates for the Cooch Behar seat. In Purulia, the Congress has announced its candidate and the AIFB too wants to join the poll fray.

"We will iron out our differences. The seven-phase election gives us some time to do so. We want to break the politics of binary of the Trinamool Congress and BJP," Mr. Basu said.

The challenge is not only to accommodate the Congress and the Left Front constituents but also the Indian Secular Front (ISF). The ISF has announced candidates for eight seats. The West Bengal Congress leadership says it has nothing to do with the ISF, a party led by Furfura Sharif religious leader Abbas Siddique and his brother and Bhangar MLA Naushad Siddique.

Names of candidates

The Congress has announced candidates for seats such as Baharampur, where State Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury is contesting, Purulia (Nepal Mahato) and Kolkata Uttar.

For the Left Front, CPI (M) State secretary Mohammed Salim is contesting from Murshidabad, Sujan Chakraborty from Dum Dum, Srijan Bhattacharya from Jadavpur, Dipsita Dhar from Serampore and Sayan Banerjee from Tamluk. ISF MLA Nausad Siddique is keen to contest from Diamond Harbour against Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee.

BJP names candidates for 11 more Lok Sabha seats

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday named its candidates for 11 more Lok Sabha seats, fielding a number of leaders who joined it from different parties recently such as Bhartruhari Mahtab, Ravneet Singh Bittu, Sushil Kumar Rinku and Preneet Kaur.

All these leaders have been fielded from the seats they represent in the outgoing Lok Sabha, while former Indian Ambassador to the U.S., Taranjit Singh Sandhu, will be making his poll debut from Amritsar.

Hans Raj Hans, who had won from North West Delhi in 2019 on BJP ticket, will contest the Faridkot seat, which is reserved for members of the Scheduled Castes.

Mr. Mahtab, who quit the BJD recently, will contest from Cuttack, Mr. Bittu from Ludhiana, Ms. Kaur from Patiala, and Mr. Rinku from Jalandhar, a seat reserved for SCs.

Both Mr. Bittu, the grandson of former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh, and Ms. Kaur, the wife of former Punjab CM Amarinder Singh, were in the Congress before joining the BJP, while Mr. Rinku was in the Aam Aadmi Party.

The BJP has announced candidates for 411 seats.

INBRIEF

3 MLAs stage stir in Himachal, seek acceptance of resignation

Three Independent leaders from Himachal Pradesh, who recently resigned as MLAs and later joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), staged a sit-in protest in Shimla on Saturday. The three MLAs – Ashish Sharma, Hoshiyar Singh, and K.L. Thakur – picketed the State Assembly, protesting the non-acceptance of their resignations by Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania. Demanding that the Speaker accept their resignations immediately, they said that they had quit voluntarily, and were not under any pressure. They had voted in favour of the BJP candidate in the Rajya Sabha election, tendered their resignations on March 22 and joined the BJP a day later.

Sharad's NCP files complaint with EC against Sena, BJP

The Sharad Pawar camp on Saturday said it has filed a complaint with the Election Commission against the BJP and the Shiv Sena for violating the Representation of the People Act and poll code by publishing the names of individuals from other parties as their star campaigners. The NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) is part of the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in Maharashtra. It claimed Shinde's Sena, published the names of various people holding high public office such as the Prime Minister, Union Ministers, Chief Minister. "This is not only a violation of the Representation of People Act, but of the MCC as the representatives of the party in power in Centre or State are categorically barred from using their official positions for the purpose of election campaign," it said. PTI

Cong. leader's daughter-in-law Archana Patil joins the BJP

Archana Patil, the daughter-in-law of former Union Home Minister and senior Congress leader Shivraj Patil, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday. The induction took place in the presence of Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, BJP's State unit president Chandrashekhar Bawankule, and other party leaders, in Mumbai. Ms. Patil's addition will strengthen the BJP's presence in Maharashtra ahead of the Lok Sabha election, Mr. Fadnavis said. "It is a matter of pleasure for us that someone from the family of Shivraj Patil, who was a senior leader of Congress is joining our party," he told presspersons on Friday. "I have been working at the grass roots level in Latur for many years now. After joining politics, I will devote myself with the same amount of dedication to the party (the BJP)," she said.

National Conference, Lone's JKPC engage in war of words

The National Conference (NC) and the J&K Peoples Conference (JKPC), are engaged in a war of words ahead of the Lok Sabha elections in the Kashmir Valley. "One of the most heavily guarded VIPs' in India happens to be the ex-Chief Minister of J&K, Mr. Omar Abdullah. And Mr. Abdullah, feeling fully secure behind the impregnable security grid, has absolutely no qualms in scripting a discourse which has the greatest probability to end in violence and consume the lives of unguarded innocents," JKPC chairman Sajad Lone said. His reaction comes in the wake of recent speeches made by Mr. Abdullah, where he made oblique references to the JKPC being "a crony of the BJP".

Stage set for a Pawar vs Pawar contest in Baramati LS seat

Shoumojit Banerjee
PUNE

NCP leader Ajit Pawar with his wife Sunetra Pawar in Mumbai. FILE PHOTO

The ruling Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party on Saturday officially announced the name of Mr. Pawar's wife, Sunetra Pawar, as the ruling *Mahayuti*'s candidate for the high-stakes Baramati Lok Sabha seat in Pune district. The *Mahayuti* comprises the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, the BJP and Ajit Pawar's NCP.

While Ms. Sunetra Pawar's name was long expected, it was formally announced by NCP (Ajit Pawar faction) State chief Sunil Tatkare.

Ms. Sunetra will be pitted against Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule, the incumbent Baramati MP, whose candidature was also announced on Saturday in the first list of five Lok Sabha candidates put out by the Opposition NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) faction.

Besides Ms. Sule, the other seats and candidates announced by NCP (SP) State chief Jayant Patil are Amol Kale (Wardha), Bhaskar Bhagare (Dindori), Amol Kolhe (Shirur) and Nilesh Lanke (Ahmednagar).

Family stronghold

A three-time MP for Baramati, Ms. Sule had her candidature in the Pawar family's stronghold declared by her father Sharad Pawar some time ago.

Both Ms. Sule and Ms. Sunetra have thrown themselves into the Baramati poll campaign, given that this Lok Sabha seat is arguably the most keenly contested of all 48 seats in Maharashtra.

BJP wins unopposed 10 of 60 seats in Arunachal Pradesh Assembly election

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Arunchal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu being congratulated by BJP leader Ashok Singhal after he was elected unopposed. PTI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has won 10 seats without a contest in the 60-member Arunachal Pradesh Assembly.

The party, however, fell short of the Congress record of 11 seats won unopposed in 2014.

While no Opposition parties fielded candidates in five constituencies, rivals of the BJP withdrew their nominations in five more by Saturday, the last day of withdrawal of candidature.

Among those who won uncontested were State Chief Minister Pema Khandu from Mukto and Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein from Chowkham.

The other winners are Ratu Techi from Sagalee, Jikke Tako, Tali; Nyato Dukam, Taliha; Mutchu Mithi, Roing; Hage Appa, Ziro-Hapoli; Techi Kaso, Itanagar; Dongru Siongju, Bomdila; and Dasanglu Pul, Hayuliang.

"...It's all because of the people's love and trust in #ModiKiGuarantee and our dedication in ensuring all-round development of the State," Mr. Khandu wrote on social media platform X (formerly Twitter).

'Confident of a win'

Later, he told presspersons that the party was confident of bagging the remaining 50 Assembly seats and the two Lok Sabha seats in the State.

"We are confident that we will win the Arunachal East and Arunachal West Lok Sabha seats with a thumping majority because of the amount of love that we are getting from the people," the Chief Minister said, attributing the support for the BJP to the "unprecedented" development in Arunachal Pradesh under 10 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He also said the State has been used to uncontested electoral victories. Four candidates had won unopposed in 1999, one in 2004, three in 2009, 11 in 2014, and three in 2019.

Assam CM cites 'reign of peace', bats for Muslim votes

Rahul Karmakar
UDALGURI (ASSAM)

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the BJP is banking on the "equal treatment" of all communities and the "unprecedented" reign of peace to get Muslim votes in the Lok Sabha election.

Elections to the 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in Assam are scheduled in three phases. "We have not discriminated against Muslims. Developmental projects and beneficiary schemes have been distributed equally to all communities, including Muslims, who I do not think want more than what they have received," Mr. Sarma told presspersons after a meeting of the NDA constituents in Udalguri.

"For the first time, the minorities are getting a taste of good governance and equal treatment in the true spirit of '*sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas and sabka prayas*'. And unlike the communal violence in the past, they are living in peace," he said.

Cong. seeks to downplay Pappu Yadav's Purnea claim

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Pappu Yadav

A screening panel to shortlist potential Congress candidates from Bihar for the Lok Sabha election met on Saturday but it did not discuss the contentious Purnea seat.

"We are not bothered who is saying what as we are focused on doing our best in the nine seats that has been allotted to us," said a senior Congress leader, trying to downplay the threat of five-term MP Rajesh Ranjan, alias Pappu Yadav, standing as rebel candidate from the Purnea seat.

"Look at Nikhil babu [former IPS officer Nikhil Kumar]. He can't contest from Aurangabad but he hasn't made any public statement. We won't be encouraging any friendly fight at Purnea," the leader added.

The Purnea seat has not only gone to the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) that is leading the *mahagatbandhan* or grand alliance in Bihar but the party has already declared Bima Bharati as the official candidate.

But Mr. Yadav, who merged his Jan Adhikar Party with the Congress on March 20, has staked claim to the seat. He had represented it thrice earlier and was hoping to contest on Congress ticket.

But a few leaders questioned his induction, given his image of being a "*baahubali*".

"In the early 2000s when Lalu Prasad was the Chief Minister, people feared Pappu Yadav's gang. Of course, now he has tried hard to acquire a Robinhood-like image in Kosi-Seemanchal," senior leader of Bihar Congress Kishore Kumar Jha said.

The party, the source said, was banking on the calculation that Mr. Pappu Yadav's induction would have strengthened it in Seemanchal region in north-eastern Bihar that has important Lok Sabha seats like Madhepura, Supaul, Katihar and Kisanganj.

Mr. Pappu Yadav, whose wife Ranjeet Ranjan, who is a senior Congress leader and a Rajya Sabha MP, had credited Priyanka Gandhi Vadra with his induction.

"When Priyanka Gandh*iji* called me to come and join the Congress, I did not think twice," Mr. Pappu Yadav said while speaking to presspersons in Purnea on Friday.

However, the Congress did not factor the frosty relationship between Lalu Prasad's family and Mr. Pappu, who had been expelled from the RJD earlier.

Mr. Pappu Yadav, who detests being called a *baahubali* now, still battles the tag of being an outsider by many Congress veterans.

"This seems to be new tradition that outsiders are made to feel important and old-timers are ignored," Mr. Jha said.

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INBRIEF

Nine pirates being brought to India to face legal action: Navy

A day after rescuing a hijacked Iranian fishing vessel and its 23-member Pakistani crew under an anti-piracy operation at sea, the Indian Navy on Saturday said the nine surrendered pirates are being brought to India for further legal action. Legal action will be initiated under the Maritime Anti-Piracy Act, 2022. The Indian Navy's specialist teams have completed sanitisation and seaworthiness checks of fishing vessel *Al-Kambar* (in picture), according to the Navy's spokesperson. "The crew, comprising 23 Pakistani nationals, were given a thorough medical check-up prior to clearing the boat to continue with her fishing activities," it said. PTI

PAN fraud: M.P. student gets I-T notice of over ₹40 crore

A university student in Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh approached the police after he got an Income Tax notice over transactions of more than ₹40 crore done by a company created fraudulently using his PAN details, an official said on Saturday. The company formed by unidentified person/s using the details of Jiwaji University student Pramod Dandotiya has also not paid GST, the official said. "As per Mr. Dandotiya's complaint, a company was being operated by misusing his PAN details and it had carried out transactions of more than ₹40 crore. The complainant found this out after he got an IT notice," Additional SP Shiyaz K.M. said. PTI

Alchemist group case: ED attaches assets worth ₹29 cr.

The ED has provisionally attached properties estimated to be ₹29.45 crore of the Alchemist group companies in a money laundering case. The group was headed by Kanwar Deep Singh, a former Rajya Sabha member of the Trinamool Congress, it said on Saturday. Earlier, it had attached ₹10.29 crore belonging to the Trinamool in the same case. "The probe also revealed that an amount of ₹10.29 crore was paid by Alchemist Airways Private Limited to various aviation/helicopter companies for the aviation services availed by All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)...during the campaigning for 2014 Lok Sabha elections," it had said.

Land grabbing case: ED questions Shahjahan in jail

The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday questioned suspended Trinamool Congress leader Sheikh Shahjahan in the Basirhat Correctional Home in connection with cases involving land grabbing in Sandeshkhali. The ED officers interrogated him inside the jail for over four hours after getting permission from Basirhat court in West Bengal. Mr. Shahjahan was arrested on February 29 after 55 days on the run following violent protests led by women, alleging sexual atrocities and land grab. He went missing after a mob attacked an Enforcement Directorate (ED) team that went to search his house in the alleged ration scam on January 5. PTI

SUDOKU

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Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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3	9	1	6	8	5	7	2	4
2	5	7	9	4	1	3	6	8

250 rescued from cyber fraud centres abroad: MEA

Govt. working with Cambodian authorities to crack down on those responsible for the scam; recruits forced into cybercrime; online recruitment scam is linked mainly to Chinese firms

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

The Union government is "collaborating closely" with Cambodian authorities and has rescued about 250 Indians from Cambodia, who had been lured there by cyber fraud and fake online recruitment scams, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Saturday. About 75 of them have returned to India over the past three months.

The return of the Indians comes as investigating agencies launched a nationwide operation against agents – many of them believed to be linked to companies in China – that operate in Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar to recruit job seekers across South Asia and South East Asia on the promise of working in the information technology industry there. Once they go abroad, the recruits are instead forced to work in cyber fraud centres, and coerced into defrauding others over the telephone and online.

Prompt response

"Our Embassy in Cambodia has been promptly responding to complaints from Indian nationals who were lured with employment opportunities to that country but were forced to undertake illegal cyber work," the MEA said in a statement on Saturday. "We are also working with Cambodian authorities and with agencies in India to crack down on those responsible for these fraudulent schemes," it added.

The statement followed reports that the MEA has been coordinating with the Home Ministry and law enforcement agencies to help bring back about 300 of those who have reached out to the Indian Embassy in Phnom Penh.

In January this year, the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) and the Home Ministry had said that about half of the 5,000 calls received on the cybercrime helplines on an average day relate to such scams involving companies based in Cambodia and Myanmar, linked mainly to Chinese apps.

Over the past year, arrests have been made in many States, including Odisha, Punjab and Kerala

Caution advised

The MEA and the Indian Embassy have issued several advisories warning job-seekers against accepting such job offers. "All Indian nationals who are travelling to jobs in Cambodia and the South East Asia region are advised that there are many fake agents operating in the region, who along with the agents in India, are luring people to scam companies, involved especially in cyber crimes," said one such advisory, counselling the job-seekers to only go through authorised agents approved by the MEA.

Over the past year, police in several Indian States, including Odisha, Punjab, and Kerala, have made arrests in such cases. Officials conceded that there were likely to be many more victims across South East Asia, but said that they were working mainly with those who have reached out to Indian embassies abroad, and those whom the local police officials in those countries have managed to rescue.

Vicious network

A nationwide hunt against agents involved in such scams has revealed some insights into their operations

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

- Job seekers from across South Asia and South East Asia are recruited by agents operating in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and India
- They are promised IT jobs but once there, are forced to work in cyber fraud centres
- They then work over the phone and through social media and get people to invest in fraudulent cryptocurrency trading and other schemes
- MHA says they get over 2,000 calls a day about such scams involving firms in Cambodia and Myanmar
- MEA cautions people against accepting job offers from South East Asia region, asking them to go through authorised agents

Green groups seek ban on infra projects in Himalayas

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

More than 60 environmental and social organisations in the country have demanded a complete ban on all mega infrastructure projects, such as those related to the railways, dams, hydro projects and four-lane highways, in the Himalayas, and have urged for referendums and public consultations to be made compulsory for all development projects.

The organisations, jointly leading the "People for Himalaya" campaign, issued a five-point charter of demand for all political parties for the Lok Sabha polls. They called for a complete moratorium on all mega infrastructure projects along with a comprehensive multidisciplinary review of the impacts of the existing projects.

The organisations demanded that democratic decision-making through referendums and public consultations be made compulsory for large infrastructure projects.

They also called for the strengthening of the Environment Impact Assessment Notification-1994, the scrapping of the EIA-2020 amendments and FCA-2023 amendments, and free prior informed consent of gram sabhas for all development projects.

Ex-MLA Mukhtar Ansari laid to rest in Ghazipur amid heavy security

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari was laid to rest at the Kali Bagh burial ground in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh, on Saturday amid heavy security.

The former MLA, who had been in jail since 2005, suffered a cardiac arrest on Thursday. While his family alleged that he had been poisoned in jail, Opposition leaders have sought a high-level investigation into his death.

The body was brought to the family's ancestral burial ground at Yusufpur in Mohammadabad, roughly a kilometre from the Ansaris' residence, on Saturday morning. A sea of supporters accompanied the body in procession to the burial ground.

The district police faced difficulty in managing the crowd that tried to force its way into the burial ground where entry was restricted. Security personnel, including from the paramilitary, were deployed in thousands around the Ansaris' residence and the burial ground.

Supporters of Mukhtar Ansari take part in the funeral procession of the politician at Mohammadabad in Ghazipur on Saturday. ANI

Plea to supporters

Earlier, the family requested supporters to pray for the deceased. In a post on X on Friday, Suhaib Ansari, MLA and nephew of the deceased, said: "My younger uncle Mr. Mukhtar Ansari Sahib passed away last night. Tomorrow at 10 a.m. he will be buried in the Kalibagh graveyard of our Yusufpur Mohammadabad (Ghazipur). You all are requested to pray for the forgiveness of the deceased."

Mukhtar Ansari, a five-time former MLA, died on Thursday night within hours of his admission to the Rani Durgawati Medical College in Banda district.

"Around 8.25 p.m., convicted/undertrial prisoner Mukhtar Ansari, son of Subhanullah, aged 63, was brought by jail staff to the emergency department at the Rani Durgawati Medical College in an unconscious state. The patient was treated by a team of nine doctors and given all possible medical facilities, but despite all the attempts for recovery, the patient died due to cardiac arrest," reads the medical bulletin from the hospital.

On March 26, he was admitted to the same hospital after he complained of abdominal pain and later discharged. His family had alleged that he was being "poisoned".

Mr. Ansari faced more than five dozen cases and had been languishing in jail since 2005. Opposition leaders in the State have demanded a high-level investigation into the death, with Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav calling for an investigation under the supervision of a Supreme Court judge, and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati pushing for a high-level probe.

Anticipatory bail must not be norm in many cases, rules SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Bench said the power of the courts to grant anticipatory or pre-arrest bail is an extraordinary one

The Supreme Court has in a judgment said that bail may be the rule in many cases, but anticipatory bail is certainly not the norm.

A Bench of Justices C.T. Ravikumar and Sanjay Kumar said the power of the courts to grant anticipatory or pre-arrest bail is an extraordinary one, and not to be given for the asking.

"Though in many cases it was held that bail is said to be a rule, it cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be said that anticipatory bail is the rule. It cannot be the rule and the question of its grant should be left to the cautious and judicious discretion of the court, depending on the facts and circumstances of each case," the top court said.

The judgment was based on an appeal for anticipatory bail filed by persons booked under provisions of the Indian Penal Code for offences, including assault on a woman, wrongful restraint, causing grievous hurt, and the provisions of the Prevention of Witch (Daain) Practices Act, 1999 in Bihar.

The court observed that anticipatory bail should not lead to miscarriage of justice, especially in cases of crimes against women.

"The court concerned has to be very cautious as the grant of interim protection or protection to the accused in serious cases may lead to miscarriage of justice and may hamper the investigation to a great extent as it may sometimes lead to tampering or distraction of the evidence," Justice Ravikumar cautioned.

Facing pressure from Google, NCPCR, Ullu drops adult content

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

Pressure has been mounting on the adult streaming platform Ullu on its content, with the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) asking the government to act against the firm. Separately, the Digital Publisher Content Grievance Council (DPCGC) has issued a rebuke of the streaming service's catalogue. The DPCGC is a streaming self-regulatory body, and Ullu is a member.

Under notice from Google, the Android version of the app has been cleansed of much of the content it has built its business on. Google's action was revealed to the NCPCR in a reply obtained by *The Hindu*.

As streaming platforms find their content increasingly restricted against political and religious themes – often due to self-imposed restraint – the government has set its sights on smaller players who put out mature content intended for adults. Eighteen such sites and apps were blocked earlier this month for "obscene and vulgar content".

These sites include "Hot Shots VIP[,] Mojflix, MoodX, and Uncut Adda". While there is no explicit ban on pornography in India, many international websites offering such content have been ordered offline by the Uttarakhand High Court, in a *suo motu* 2018 judgment that the government and Internet providers continue to comply with.

The Ullu app has been cleansed of much of the content it has built its business on.

The DPCGC was established under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

From all the appeals that DPCGC's grievance redressal board has heard and issued orders on, only one outcome has been published on its website – a June 2023 order against Ullu finding the firm had a "solitary aim" to "depict sexual contents," and to take down some content that fit this description. The board is headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice A.K. Sikri (retd).

Ullu CEO Vibhu Agarwal did not respond to a message seeking comment. Last year, though, the firm defended itself to the DPCGC saying that it "offers a wide variety of genres from drama, horror, suspense, thriller to comedy and beyond which targets audience[s] above eighteen years of age," and that it has safeguards to prevent minors from viewing its content, according to Justice Sikri's summary of arguments by Priyannka Chaurasiya, a lawyer for the firm.

Google told the NCPCR that it found no inappropriate content featuring children on Ullu, indicating that the commission's concern was around such content being accessible to minors, and not featuring them. The IT Rules have mandatory provisions for streaming services to provide age-restricting features for mature content, and most streaming providers are in compliance with this requirement.

An advisory by Justice Sikri in December 2023 to streaming services, previously unreported, "strongly advises the platforms to undertake suitable measures to ensure that all the content on their respective platforms must comply with the test of obscenity and pornography as enumerated under the various laws of the land." The advisory does not name Ullu.

Ullu had set itself apart from rival adult streaming outfits by abstaining from depicting graphic nudity or other acts that could trigger immediate backlash from authorities.

INBRIEF

'CUB exceeds ₹1-lakh cr. total business milestone in FY24'

City Union Bank (CUB) has crossed a milestone in FY24 as the private sector bank's total business exceeded the ₹1 lakh-crore mark for the first time. The lender achieved this in its 120th year of operations. Total business of the bank crossed the ₹50,000- crore mark in FY17 with the second ₹50,000 crore coming just seven years later. In the December 2023 quarter, the bank's total business stood at ₹96,744 crore, and the lender reported a profit after tax of ₹253 crore.

'Unsold homes in 9 cities slid 7% in last 3 months on sales'

Unsold housing inventories fell 7% in the last three months across nine major cities to about 4.81 lakh units on higher sales than new supply, PropEquity said. Real estate data-analytic firm PropEquity data showed unsold housing stock slid to 4,81,566 units at the end of March this year from 5,18,868 units at the end of December 2023 across 9 major cities. The cities are Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Thane, Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai and Kolkata. PTI

Bengaluru, Mumbai lead in office space absorption: C&W

The Indian office market reported a net absorption of 11.5 million square feet (MSF) across the top 8 cities in Q1 24 (January-March quarter of 2024), as per the office-segment data released by Cushman & Wakefield (C&W). "This is the third-highest level recorded in the last five years, demonstrating a robust appetite for office space among businesses. Net absorption is a barometer of real demand or expansion of occupied space in the market," C&W said.

IT Act change yet to aid MSMEs

Section 43 b (h) of the IT Act allows payments due to MSMEs to be deducted if they were made within a stipulated time; experts note that while this will benefit MSMEs in the long-run, some buyers may choose to source from other suppliers

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

An intervention introduced in the Union Budget last year to ensure timely payments to micro- and small-scale manufacturing and service units is yet to help them and even hurting some.

Section 43 b (h) of the Income Tax Act says payments due to UDYAN-registered micro- and small-scale industries would be allowed as deduction only if the actual payment was made within the time stipulated in the MSME Act. Otherwise, the payment would be taxed as income.

Payment rules: If MSMEs have a written agreement with a buyer, payments need to have been made within 45 days. REUTERS

If a micro or small-scale unit had a written agreement with a medium- or large-scale industry for supply of components, spares, or any other product or service, the payment should be made by the buyer within 45 days. If there was no agreement, the payment should be made within 15 days.

However, the risk for micro units was that the buyers would prefer to source from suppliers who were not UDYAN-registered, said B. Kandavel, organising secretary of the Federation of Tamil Nadu Powerlooms Associations. For instance, weavers in Tamil Nadu supplying textile products to large buyers got paid once in three months or so. Buyers are now either reducing payment as the credit period has dropped or are preferring unregistered suppliers, he said.

Still, MSMEs would benefit in the long run as they would get payments on time, asserted Anil Bhardwaj, secretary general of the Federation of Indian Micro, and Small & Medium Enterprises.

The intervention will aid MSMEs though it will take time for the system to settle down and may also temporarily affect the working capital of buyers, said V. Thirugnanam, president, Coimbatore District Small Industries Association.

Nirmala Sitharaman

GDP set to grow 8% or more in Q4: Sitharaman

Reuters
NEW DELHI

India's gross domestic product (GDP) is on track to grow by 8% or more in the quarter ending March 31, Union Minister of Finance Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday.

The economy is expected to show the same rate of year-on-year expansion for the 2023/24 financial year, Ms. Sitharaman added, citing the impact of improved inflation management and macroeconomic stability.

"Hopefully the fourth quarter... will also have (growth) of 8% or above 8% resulting in 2023/24 having an average growth in GDP of 8% or over 8%," she said at an event in Mumbai.

GDP data for the January-March quarter is due to be released on May 31.

Asia's third-largest economy grew 8.4% in the October-December quarter, outpacing the 7.6% logged in the previous quarter.

India's economy is projected to grow at 7.6% in the current fiscal year, according to the latest government estimates.

Gem and jewellery exports to cross $100 bn. soon: Ambani

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

India's gem and jewellery industry would achieve exports of $100 billion in a few years and Indian-designed jewellery would make its mark globally, Mukesh Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director, Reliance Industries Ltd., said on Friday.

Mukesh Ambani

"Evolving remarkably over the years, the industry has emerged as a leading player in the global luxury market, and as a pivotal contributor to India's export economy. It has also become a major generator of large-scale employment opportunities," Mr. Ambani said.

"As a result, the industry is poised to achieve exports of $100 billion in the coming years from $40 billion currently."

Vipul Shah, Chairman, Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council, said, "Today, India's exports continue to rise, our domestic market flourishes, and our artisans inspire the world with their intricate creations. This progress is a direct reflection of the hard work, dedication, and collective vision of the industry stakeholders".

"We must empower our artisans, invest in research and development, and leverage technology to unlock new horizons of growth. As we mark the 50th India Gem & Jewellery Awards (IGJA), we not only applaud the remarkable achievements of individual exporters but also acknowledge the collective endeavours of the industry at large," he added.

Russian central bank lends more yuan under currency swap

Reuters
MOSCOW

Russia's central bank said it had provided banks with 2.5 billion Chinese yuan ($346.25 million) for the equivalent 31.8 billion roubles on Friday under currency swap transactions.

The banks' maximum demand for yuan swaps was recorded on February 29, when the entire 10 billion yuan limit was used.

The central bank launched swap transactions for yuan and roubles in January 2023. The total amount of currency swap operations last year was 59.7 billion Chinese yuan, the central bank said.

'Reserves sufficient'

The bank also said its liquid reserve assets were sufficient to maintain financial stability and perform necessary operations.

Opportunities for further diversification of reserve assets into currencies and financial instruments of "unfriendly" countries were limited by the risks inherent in these currencies and economies.

'Fashion industry should shun discounting, adopt hyper-personalisation'

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

The fashion retail industry is contemplating moving away from "discounting" and embracing hyper-personalisation (close to bespoke model) to shore up its balance sheets and stop margin erosion, hinted industry captains.

Domain experts, who spoke at the India Fashion Forum (IFF), an industry intelligence summit, held in Bengaluru, further said several pressing challenges constantly confronted the industry and therefore urged the fashion retail community to move away from conventional discounting practices and embrace data-driven personalisation which may lead to better business impacts and enhanced customer satisfaction.

Suparna Mitra, CEO, Titan Watches & Wearables, highlighted the detrimental impact of unsold inventory resulting from heavy investments in large-scale production.

"The perpetual cycle of excess stock leading to discounted rates threatens the financial health of fashion businesses. However, a deeper understanding of consumer behavior presents a potential solution," she recommended.

Echoing similar sentiments, Shailesh Chaturvedi, Managing Director and CEO of Arvind Fashions cautioned the industry against discounting and commoditisation.

"Today's consumers are discerning and savvy. They recognise the facade of discounts and demand authenticity. Our industry must transcend pricing and differentiate through innovation to remain competitive," he asserted.

New fads: Gen-AI, client-data algorithms will allow fashion brands to know consumer desires more precisely, says Chaturvedi. REUTERS

Experts noted the detrimental impact of unsold inventory resulting from heavy investments

By harnessing disruptive technologies such as generative AI and customer data algorithms, fashion brands would know consumer desires more precisely, Mr. Chaturvedi, who is also the Chairman of the India Fashion Forum, added.

Shivanee Dutt, Director, Brand Marketing & Merchandising, Snapdeal, emphasised the critical role of personalised experiences in engaging discerning consumers. "Tailored communication strategies driven by consumer data insights are essential for resonating deeply with today's audience," she said.

According to participants, the integration of generative AI, from chatbots to personalised content creation and data visualisation is revolutionising marketing strategies and reshaping the entire fashion retail landscape in India and globally.

Value creator

Amid the evolving nature of consumer behaviour and the importance of leveraging technology to meet changing demands, technology would be the largest value creator, observed Saloni Nangia, President & MD of Technopak Advisors while adding, "AI will be an enabler and a disruptor, and sustainability will continue to hold importance."

Murali Balan, Co-founder of Tenovia, an e-com analytics firm, emphasised the transformative power of data analytics in guiding strategic decision-making. "Data-driven insights unlock opportunities for personalisation, enabling brands to offer bespoke experiences that transcend generic marketing approaches," he pointed out.

Chai Kings CEO Sadique (left) and COO S. Balaji are eyeing 1 lakh cups in sales daily.

Chai Kings eyes $2-mn fundraise for expansion

N. Anand
CHENNAI

Chai Kings is planning to raise $2 million to open 80 outlets in 18-20 months, said CEO Jahabar Sadique.

"We have initiated talks with venture capitalists to raise the much-needed funds [the lack of which] that derailed our expansion plans," he told *The Hindu*. "We need it during FY25 and FY26 to foray aggressively into neighbouring States," he added.

Currently, Chai Kings has 56 outlets of which 50 are in Chennai. As per the original plan, the B2C firm was to open more outlets in Chennai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru. But the plan couldn't take off on account of the pandemic.

"Before the pandemic, we were selling 25,000 cups per day. We have crossed the pre-COVID level and are selling around 30,000 cups. Our aim is to sell one lakh cups per day in 20 months," he said.

"The series A funding of ₹16 crore will help us to move into Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Tier-II cities of Tamil Nadu," said Chief Operating Officer S. Balaji.

Chai Kings is likely to end FY24 with a revenue of ₹45 crore.

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Naturally occurring bile acid can blunt statin-induced diabetes

Vasudevan Mukunth

Administering ursodeoxycholic acid (UDCA) can stave off the tendency of statins to induce glucose intolerance and diabetes, a study by a group of researchers in China has found.

Statins are prescribed to people with a high risk of cardiovascular disease. They work by blocking the activity of an enzyme involved in the metabolic pathway that produces LDL, or "bad", cholesterol. Statins are on the World Health Organization's list of essential medicines and among the most sold drugs worldwide.

However, many studies have found statins could increase the risk of developing diabetes.

'Frank diabetes'

"It has been known for a few years now that statins can induce glucose intolerance and even frank diabetes in some people," Dr. V. Mohan, chairman of the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation, Chennai, told *The Hindu*.

He added that doctors have continued to prescribe them because statins' benefits "far outweigh the risk". Nonetheless, the mechanism by which statins have this effect has been unclear.

In the study, published in February in the journal *Cell Metabolism*, the researchers reported one mechanism through which statins could increase glucose intolerance, involving UDCA, a bile acid.

The team recruited 30 people with atorvastatin and 10 without and tracked their metabolism for four months.

They reported that the faeces of those taking atorvastatin had a reduced abundance of bacteria of the genus *Clostridium* and that these individuals had "altered serum and faecal bile acid profiles" as well.

Gut microbiome

The gut microbiome is a community of bacteria in the gut in a symbiotic relationship with the body. The researchers found that the *Clostridium*-deficient microbiome inhibited enzymes called hydroxysteroid dehydrogenases and lowered UDCA.

They also verified an idea that "the decreased *Clostridium*-rich microbiota might influence bile acid synthesis and excretion and impair glucose metabolism" in a 12-week study of mice.

To check the role of UDCA, they recruited five participants on statins and administered 10-13 mg/kg (of body weight) of UDCA per day. After two months, they found the individuals' HbA1C levels, among others, were "substantially decreased".

They concluded that "UDCA restored impaired glucose homeostasis without limiting the lipid-lowering effect of statin".

Dr. Mohan called the finding "good news" and "a new angle" but also said the underlying hypothesis will have to be tested in randomised clinical trials.

Tropical cyclones of higher intensity demand a new category

Tropical cyclones with peak wind speeds far exceeding category 5 scale of 252 km/hour are increasingly seen due to global warming, making a case for introducing category 6 for wind speed above 309 km/hour

Madhavan Nair Rajeevan

Global warming intensifies tropical cyclones
Tropical cyclones form mainly in the North Atlantic, East Pacific, West Pacific, South Pacific and the Indian Ocean
Saffir-Simpson (SS) hurricane wind scale introduced in the early 1970s has five categories. Wind speed exceeding 252 km/hour fall under category 5
Long-term data indicate that the frequency of intense tropical cyclones is increasing in the large ocean basins
For every degree of warming, an increase in wind speed of 12% is observed in the strongest cyclones
Tropical cyclones with wind speed far exceeding category 5 are becoming common. A new category 6 scale for wind speed over 309 km/hour may be required
The Western Pacific basin is the most active region for tropical cyclones, and accounts for about a third of all tropical cyclones. The north Indian basin accounts for about 4%
At present, the north Indian Ocean is not very vulnerable to category 6 storms. As global warming continues, category 6 storms may occur here in near future
There is a need to revisit India's disaster management strategy for tropical cyclones and the early warning systems
Increasing occurrence: Five tropical storms with wind speeds over 309 km/hour occurred in the last nine years.
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Tropical cyclones are powerful and destructive weather systems that form over warm tropical ocean basins. where sea surface temperatures are above 26.5 degree C. These storms are characterised by strong winds, heavy precipitation and storm surges and can cause significant damage to coastal communities and infrastructure.

Climatologically, tropical cyclones form mainly in the North Atlantic, East Pacific, West Pacific, South Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Out of 85 tropical storms that develop annually over the warm tropical oceans, more than half (45) of them intensify into tropical cyclones. The Western Pacific basin is the most active region for tropical cyclones and accounts for about a third of the world's tropical cyclones. The North Indian basin accounts for only about 4% of the global total, although it is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world to the effects of such cyclones.

The Saffir-Simpson (SS) hurricane wind scale, introduced in the early 1970s, is the most widely used metric for warning the public about the dangers of tropical cyclones. The SS hurricane wind scales are categorised by the maximum sustained wind speed at a height of 10 metres. Although most tropical cyclone-related deaths are caused by storm surge and heavy rainfall, wind hazard remains an important metric for communicating risk to the public and a critical metric for measuring the impact of these cyclones. There are five categories on the SS hurricane wind scale – category 1 to category 5 – with category 5 wind speed exceeding 252 km/hour. The combined effects of wind, storm surge, and rainfall in a category 5 impact would completely raze any structure.

The sharp rise in man-made greenhouse gas emissions has led to global warming of the order of 1.10 degree C since pre-industrial times. The warming can be observed not only at the sea surface, but also in the depths of the ocean, which increases the heat content of the ocean and thus favours the intensification of tropical cyclones. Long-term data indicate that the frequency of intense tropical cyclones is increasing in the large ocean basins. For every degree of warming, an increase in wind speed of 12% is observed in the strongest cyclones, which corresponds to a 40% increase in destructive potential. As warm waters extend further poleward, cyclones are shifting poleward, with more storms forming at higher latitudes than in the past. A warmer atmosphere can hold more moisture, leading to heavier rainfall when tropical cyclones make landfall. As the oceans warm, cyclones also strengthen faster and spend more lifetime over the oceans. In 2023, tropical cyclone Freddy spent 37 days over the oceans, making it the longest-lived cyclones ever recorded.

Category 5

In a recent research paper published in the *Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences,* the authors document that storms are occurring at intensities well above Category 5 and that record wind speeds are likely to continue as the planet continues to warm. At the time of its introduction, the SS wind scale did not foresee the need for a tropical cyclone-beyond category 5. However, due to global warming, there is now a need to define a category 6 cyclone. The authors therefore proposed to introduce a hypothetical modification of the SS wind scale to tie category 5 to peak wind speeds between 252-309 km/hour and to include an additional category 6 above 309 km/hour.

Observations indicate that of the 197 tropical cyclones categorised as category 5 in the 42-year period from 1980 to 2021, half occurred in the last 17 years of the period. Five of these storms which occurred in the last nine years of the record, exceeded the hypothetical category 6 (with wind speeds of over 309 km/hour). Simulations of future climate change suggest that the annual exceedance of the category 6 threshold will increase even more in the regions where intense tropical cyclones currently occur. It is expected that the proposed 6th category of the SS wind scale could raise awareness of the dangers of the increased risk of large cyclones due to global warming.

At present, the North Indian Ocean is not as vulnerable to category 6 storms. However, as global warming continues unabated, there is a good chance that a category 6 storm with maximum wind speeds of over 309 km/hour may occur over the North Indian Ocean in the near future. Therefore, there is a need to revisit India's disaster management strategy for tropical cyclones and the early warning systems.

(Madhavan Nair Rajeevan was former secretary to the Government of India and presently the Vice Chancellor, Atria University, Bengaluru)

Sprouting a sandalwood sapling

SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. Balasubramanian

Sandalwood hardly needs an introduction to the readers of *The Hindu*. It has been valued for many centuries, for its fragrant oil, its prized wood, and the many medicinal uses it has been put to. The tree that all this comes from, however, is not all that familiar. Growing in deciduous forests, it is a partial, or hemiparasite that needs four or five other trees growing around it. Under the ground, sandalwood roots form a haustorium that forms an octopus-like hold on the host tree's roots, from where water and nutrients are taken.

The sandalwood fruit is probably even more unfamiliar. About 1.5 cm in diameter, the fleshy fruit is a shiny purplish black when ripe. The one seed inside is a hard, dry kernel, not the usual tough seed coat protecting a fleshy interior. This makes it difficult for the seed to survive beyond one season.

Both the above properties - the need for other trees in the early growth phase, and the seeds, which are short-lived and cannot be stored, have added to the overexploited tree's difficulties. This has led to a drastic fall in the number of sandalwood trees in the forests of South India. The IUCN has classified sandalwood as a vulnerable species. It is not surprising that Australia is now the world's largest supplier of sandalwood and its oil.

Ideal way: Passage through the digestive system of birds is good for the seeds as they have better chances of maturing into trees.

Dispersal by birds

The fruit is bitter, and not to human tastes. But it is loved by birds. About 10 species, such as the Asian Koel, and the Gray Hornbill swallow the fruit whole, and over time drop the seeds at great distances from the tree they feasted on. These birds are among India's larger frugivores, or eaters of fruit. The sandalwood tree's fruit is just right for the koels and hornbills. It has been established that sandalwood trees that produce larger seeds usually end up with the seeds close by. Although the large seeds are better equipped for germination, birds cannot swallow those large seeds, and drop them off after pecking away at the flesh.

The passage through the digestive system is good for the seeds. The seeds now germinate very quickly and have better chances of maturing into trees. This is the reason why forests, and not plantations, are where we get to see a few mature sandalwood trees. Sadly, the thinning of forests has reduced bird populations, and therefore the chances of proper seed dispersal.

Can humans try to emulate birds? Researchers at the Kerala Agricultural University in Thrissur, working with European colleagues have tried various ways of priming sandalwood seeds for germination (*Forests*, 14:1076, 2023). Best results were obtained when they soaked freshly collected sandalwood tree seeds in a 5% solution of polyethylene glycol-6000 for two days. This interesting synthetic substance induces osmotic pressure on the cells of the seed and pushes the germination process forward. This is called osmopriming, and when done correctly is more effective than soaking in just water. The sprouting rate was 79% compared to 45% when just planting the seed.

(The article was written in collaboration with Sushil Chandani, who works in molecular modelling)

SNAPSHOTS

Imaging detects hypoxic pockets in the mouse brain

Using a bioluminescent oxygen indicator, scientists discovered a spontaneous, spatially defined occurrence of "hypoxic pockets" in the mouse brain. Their technique offers a way to learn more about brain oxygen tension (pO2), a measure of oxygen delivery and demand in brain tissue that changes dynamically but is not well understood. The findings could have implications for how rest and exercise affect pO2 in the human brain, including the role of these activities in conditions such as dementia.

Microbes may seed an autoimmune kidney disease

A member of the gut microbiome may help spark an autoimmune disease in the kidneys by leaking antigens that trigger the immune system, experiments on mice and samples from 118 people showed. Gut microbiomes of 33 patients with the disorder were skewed toward bacterial species that degrade mucin. The bacterium modified IgA1 and converted it into the deglycosylated form associated with IgA nephropathy. This created antigens that crossed from the intestines to the glomeruli region.

4 mpox vaccines in animals reveal correlates of protection

Scientists have made new discoveries about the effectiveness of four vaccines for the mpox virus – and have uncovered potential signs of immune activity that correlate with protection. Their head-to-head comparison could inform further research into safer and improved vaccines for mpox. All four vaccines protected the macaques from infections when exposed to the current outbreak strain of mpox. However, one vaccine provided almost complete protection.

Question Corner

Tooth decay

When did an uptick in dental cavities in humans begin?

Researchers have recovered remarkably preserved microbiomes from two teeth dating back 4,000 years, found in an Irish limestone cave. Genetic analyses of these microbiomes reveal major changes in the oral microenvironment from the Bronze Age to today. The authors identified several bacteria linked to gum disease and provided the first high-quality ancient genome of *Streptococcus mutans*, the major culprit behind tooth decay. While *S. mutans* is very common in modern mouths, it is exceptionally rare in the ancient genomic record. One reason for this may be the acid-producing nature of the species. This acid decays the tooth, but also destroys DNA and stops plaque from fossilising. While most ancient oral microbiomes are retrieved from fossilised plaque, this study targeted the tooth directly. Another reason for the scarcity of *S. mutans* in ancient mouths may be the lack of favourable habitats for this sugar-loving species.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

What happened to the bridge in Baltimore?

Could the Baltimore bridge disaster have been prevented? What happens when a ship's generators fail?

Vasudevan Mukunth

The story so far:
On March 26, a container vessel ran into the pillar of a bridge on the Patapsco River in Baltimore, bringing a part of the structure crashing down together with some people and cars on the bridge. By late March 27, the U.S. Coast Guard had concluded its search in the river for the bodies of the six people who fell. The vessel had an all-Indian crew.

What is the timeline of events?

After departing from the port of Baltimore at 12.28 a.m. local time, the 300-metre-long vessel *Dali* was headed for Colombo, Sri Lanka, with several containers of oil and some hazardous material. Less than an hour after its departure, people nearby reported the *Dali*'s lights flickering. Two minutes later, the ship's course also started to angle towards two of the bridge's pillars in the river. At 1.27 a.m. local time, the *Dali* mowed into the pillar and brought down a segment of the bridge.

A U.S. Coast Guard report said, the *Dali*'s crew had broadcast a mayday signal seeking help to control the vessel. This signal alerted the Coast Guard as well as prompted local authorities to close the bridge for further traffic. A part of the bridge's superstructure also fell on the vessel, smashing some containers and leaving them balanced precariously on the vessel.

The Coast Guard suggested the vessel's engine failed. In this scenario, it would have lost its lights and other facilities and, sans mechanical power, deprived its pilots of the ability to steer the vessle

Maryland governor Wes Moore later declared a state of emergency. With inputs from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, federal officials had by March 28 also virtually ruled out deliberate intent to cause the collision.

The *Dali* belongs to the Danish shipping giant Maersk and flies a Singapore flag. It is managed by the Synergy Marine Group, headed by Rajesh Unni.

What were the casualties?

The Synergy Marine Group said in statements that all crew members were safe.

The bridge's collapse dropped eight people through 50 feet into the Patapsco River. While two people were fished out soon after, the Coast Guard postponed the search for the other six because of the river's depth, temperature, lack of light, the presence of sharp objects in the water, and the risk of more parts of the bridge and/or the containers falling in.

Rear Admiral Shannon Gilreath told reporters on March 28 that the team no longer expected to find the six people alive.

What happened to the ship?

The *Dali* is propelled by a nine-cylinder two-stroke diesel engine. In the two-stroke cycle, fuel is pumped into the combustion chamber, where a spark plug causes the fuel-air mixture to explode. The energy release pushes a piston up, rotating the crankshaft. The explosion's residue (exhaust) is then pumped out of the engine to bring the piston down in the second stroke. Once the engine transfers mechanical power to the crankshaft, it can be further transferred to the propeller directly, via a gearbox or electric motors. It is also coupled with an alternator that converts the mechanical power to electric to supply appliances on the vessel, including lighting. The Coast Guard recorded a statement that at least one of *Dali*'s engines "coughed" and that "the smell of burned fuel was everywhere in the engine room", suggesting the vessel's engine failed. In this scenario, the vessel would have lost its lights and other facilities and, sans mechanical power, deprived its pilots of the ability to steer the vehicle. Onlookers reported the vessel's lights flickering on later which experts have attributed to a backup generator.

The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board said it would be checking whether the fuel used in the *Dali*'s engine was contaminated.

In 2023, Chilean authorities reported issues with *Dali*'s propulsion, although Singaporean ones said it had cleared two inspections at foreign ports the same year.

Could the collision have been prevented?

The Francis Scott Key Bridge – the structure in question – was built in the mid-1970s. Colin Caprani, a civil engineer at Monash University, Melbourne, wrote that the protective shielding around the pillars into which the ship moved wasn't designed to withstand the impact of such a large vessel. Together with the vessel's speed at the time of the collision, around 15 km/hr, he estimated the impact force to be equivalent to 20,000 tonnes. In 2016, Panama Canal authorities upgraded its locks to allow larger ships to pass through. The *Dali*'s design was subsequently modified to increase its container capacity by 10%. Before this, *Financial Times* reported, vessels of this size seldom made port along the U.S. east coast – nor did bridges over waterways here have to contend with them.

Why is unemployment high among the youth?

What has the India Employment Report 2024, prepared by the Institute for Human Development and the International Labour Organization, found? Why are educated youth also not getting jobs? Why is women participation in the labour force low? What are some of the correctives suggested?

A. M. Jigeesh

The story so far:
The India Employment Report 2024, prepared jointly by the Institute of Human Development (IHD) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), and released on March 26, revolves around "youth employment, education and skills." It has analysed trends and patterns of the Indian labour market for two decades, including the COVID-19 years, and listed the "emerging characteristics of the employment challenges now confronting the economy as well as the impact of growth on employment."

What are the key findings?

The report's authors note that the proportion of India's working-age population (aged 15-59) increased from 61% in 2011 to 64% in 2021 and is projected to reach 65% in 2036. About 7-8 million young people are added each year to the labour force. Though the proportion of youth getting an education increased from 18% in 2000 to 35% in 2022, the percentage of youth involved in economic activities decreased from 52% to 37% during the same period.

The authors warn that unemployment in the country is "predominantly a problem among youth", especially those with a secondary level of education or higher, and that it has intensified over time.

"In 2022, the share of unemployed youth in the total unemployed population was 82.9%," they noted, adding that the share of educated youth among all unemployed people also increased, from 54.2% in 2000 to 65.7% in 2022. Also, among the educated (secondary level or higher) unemployed youth, women accounted for a larger share (76.7%) than men (62.2%).

The report pointed out that most jobs in 2023 were in the informal sector; and that about half the jobs in the formal sector were also of an informal nature

Crisis time: The trend of contractual appointments and clamour for consultancies are also blamed for the dip in formal jobs. AFP

Is the crisis the result of a lack of jobs?

Santosh Mehrotra whose studies have been cited in several chapters in the report, told *The Hindu* that it's a question of both lack of opportunities and unemployability of educated youth due to poor quality of education. He urged the government to ensure that the development of skills was separated from formal education. The ILO and IHD said the share of technically qualified youth was low in India: 15.62% youth had vocational training in 2022, but out of them only 4.09% had formal vocational training. According to Mr. Mehrotra, the fact that employment in the agriculture sector has increased after 2019 is because of the lack of quality education among the youth, making it difficult for them to get jobs in other sectors. The report's authors pointed out that most jobs in 2023 (90.4%) were in the informal sector; and that around half the jobs in the formal sector (45.2%) were also of an informal nature. Mr. Mehrotra stressed the importance of creating more jobs in the formal sector, pointing out that the unemployment rate among youth had tripled between 2012 and 2018.

What is the quality of employment?

The ILO and IHD stated that the jobs remained low-productive and low-earning. Real wages and earnings showed a decline or had stagnated. A large proportion of regular workers (40.8%) and casual workers (51.9%) did not receive the average daily minimum wage prescribed for unskilled workers. The government-prescribed rate is ₹480 per day.

Central trade unions and the Samyukt Kisan Morcha are concerned about the report's findings. According to senior trade union leader Amarjeet Kaur, the ILO report flags the "wage depression" prevalent in the country, especially when food inflation is not under control. She adds that formal employment is merely 9% of total employment and that most of the workforce is kept out of any social security net. "This itself adds to unemployment and underemployment as workers without formal employment may not be able to build a base of education and skill enhancement for the next generation," she observes.

The report's authors said as individuals attain higher levels of education, they are more likely to have access to more secure and formal employment options, leading to higher average returns. Youth residing in the southern, western and north-eastern regions had greater probabilities of being in formal employment, they noted, also flagging the larger presence of socially marginalised youth in informal jobs.

Why are jobs scarce in the formal sector?

Trade unions contend that thousands of posts have not been filled for years and the policy of letting one-third of the vacancies lapse after retirements have resulted in the decrease of formal employment. The trend of contractual appointments and clamour for consultancies are also blamed for the dip in formal jobs.

What about the gender gap?

There is a significant gender gap in the labour market, with low rates of female labour force participation. The gender gap in the LFPR has remained almost consistent over the past two decades, the report's authors observed.

In 2022, the LFPR of young men (at 61.2%) was almost three times higher than that of young women (at 21.7%), and the gender gap was similar in both rural and urban areas. The report's authors have noted that there is a large proportion of young persons, particularly women, who are not in education, employment or training. Between 2012 and 2019, there was an alarming increase in unemployment because of the decrease in women participation in the workforce, a trend which has been slightly reversed post 2019. "Young women are more likely to engage in agriculture than young men," they said.

What has the report recommended?

India was expected to have a sustained economic growth of 5-6% in the next 15 years or so, the report's authors noted. "Rapid technological changes and high growth have increased the gap between skill supply and demand," they said, urging policymakers to take adequate steps to ensure rapid integration of youth into the labour market through well-targeted supply and demand measures.

The report's authors have recommended "five missions" to address the challenges: Make production and growth more employment-intensive; improve the quality of jobs; overcome labour market inequalities; make systems for skills training and active labour market policies more effective; bridge the deficits in knowledge on labour market patterns and youth employment. They have recommended measures such as integrating employment creation with macro and other economic policies to boost productive non-farm employment. They also said micro, small and medium-sized enterprises must be supported and decentralised.

The report's authors have urged the government to take steps to increase agriculture productivity, create more non-farm jobs and promote entrepreneurship. Calling for a focus on policies that boost women's participation in the labour force, they also sought a minimum quality of employment and basic rights of workers across all sectors.

Will global forest expansion hit tribals?

What are the concerns about the Global Biodiversity Framework which aims to increase areas under forest cover, inland water, coastal and marine areas to at least 30% of the world's terrestrial area? What is the situation in India?

Rahul Karmakar

The story so far:
A symposium on the rights of indigenous people organised by the University of Arizona on March 21-22 put the spotlight on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and how, in conjunction with the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act of 2023, it will hit India's tribes the hardest. Many at the symposium foresaw doom for the country's indigenous communities already affected by the establishment of national parks.

What is the Kunming-Montreal GBF?

This framework was adopted during the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in December 2022 following a four-year consultation and negotiation process. It claims to support the achievement of sustainable development goals and build on previous strategic plans, paving "an ambitious pathway to reach the global vision of a world living in harmony with nature by 2050." Accordingly, four goals were set for 2050 and 23 targets for 2030 toward planning, monitoring, reporting and reviewing implementation, organising finance, and drawing up strategies for capacity development, technical and scientific cooperation, and an agreement on digital sequence information on genetic resources. In adopting the GBF, all parties have committees to set national targets to implement it.

Activists say meeting the GBF targets will threaten the existence of indigenous populations

GETTY IMAGES

Participating at the event, New Delhi-based rights activist Suhas Chakma drew the attention of environmentalists and leaders of indigenous communities to Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal GBF, which aims to "increase terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services" to at least 30% of the world's terrestrial area. At present, protected areas (PAs) cover about 16%.

What are its implications?

Participants at the 'Symposium on Conservation, Racism, and Indigenous Peoples Human Rights' felt that the seemingly benign goals of the GBF tilt the scale in favour of corporate houses eyeing forest resources at the expense of the indigenous communities living with nature. Indigenous peoples have been denied the right to housing, health, education, electricity, and security in Indonesia's Ujungkulon National Park while Heng Saphen, an indigenous leader living inside the Beng Per Wildlife Sanctuary of Cambodia was convicted by a kangaroo court for cultivating on her own land. About 18% of Cambodia's Botum Sakor National Park stands protected after much of its land was sold off to private firms, the participants said. Involving the private sector in forest conservation is a bad idea and India has taken a step in that direction with the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act to 2023 to include zoos, safaris, ecotourism facilities, etc., as forest activities, Mr. Chakma pointed out. The UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples, José Francisco Calí Tzay, said the PAs were initially created "as recreational opportunities, hunting grounds for western colonial elites". The concept, the participants pointed out, has not changed much with ecotourism or sustainable ecotourism projects reducing the indigenous peoples to animals in a zoo, made to sit in "model replicas" of traditional houses wearing traditional dresses and ornaments, and playing traditional musical instruments.

What would GBF mean for India?

About 84% of India's national parks (89 out of a total of 106) were established in areas inhabited by the indigenous peoples and meeting the GBF targets will threaten their existence, the activists said. For instance, the initiative to upgrade the Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary in Rajasthan to a tiger reserve will affect 162 tribal villages located inside and outside the sanctuary while the expansion of the Nauradehi Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh is set to affect 62 villages of mostly tribal people. In Assam, the June 19, 2022, notification for the Barak Bhuban Wildlife Sanctuary will affect the indigenous groups. The gazette notification states that the sanctuary "is free from encroachment as per record, there are no rights and concessions of any person in the area" but the Khasis possess documents showing they have been living in the area since 1914.

What can be done to protect the tribal lands?

Mr. Chakma said a multilateral agreement like the Kunming-Montreal GBF cannot be amended but the government of India needs to change its policy.

First, it has to recognise the right to free, prior, and informed consent as guaranteed under the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act and make further amendments to the laws to make the tribals custodians of the PAs as nature has largely been protected because of their special relations with the forests and their denizens. Secondly, the government of India should not only target the tribal areas simply because they do not matter electorally.

"That Uttar Pradesh and Bihar only have one national park each - Dudhwa inhabited by the indigenous Tharu people and Valmiki inhabited by the Tharus, Oraons, Mundas, etc. – speaks for itself. If tiger reserves can be created in areas where there are no tigers such as Sahyadri (Maharashtra), Satkosia (Odisha), Kamlang (Arunachal Pradesh), Kawal (Telangana), and Dampa (Mizoram), there is no reason why PAs cannot be created in non-tribal areas," he said. Finally, India ought to address human rights violations in the PAs seriously.

Human rights issues of these people such as access to education, healthcare, and housing cannot be left to the Wildlife or Forest Department. Thousands of indigenous people living within the PAs must be respected and recognised for preserving the biodiversity and the ecosystem and not punished, he said.

PROFILES

The dissident vocalist

T.M. Krishna

The Carnatic singer, whose musical genius and reformist activism won him both plaudits and condemnation, has kicked up a storm in the music world after he got this year's Sangita Kalanidhi award

Ramya Kannan

If two hypothetical roads diverged in the mature Carnatic woods, T.M. Krishna took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference. India is no stranger to controversies about awards that are given for meritorious achievement, and yet, seldom have we seen as much flap as was witnessed after the Music Academy in Chennai announced that, this year, it would confer its top honour – the Sangita Kalanidhi award – on the Carnatic vocalist.

The award has always been widely considered to be the 'highest accolade in Carnatic music'. Conferred by an institution that has been in existence for nearly a century, at the annual conference in Chennai's most salubrious season in Margazhi, artistes have accepted it with a Bhakti akin to what they might employ on a Thyagaraja *kriti*.

To understand the opposition to Krishna, comprehending the cultural and historical context is essential.

The idea of a Music Academy originally emerged as an offshoot of the All India Congress Session held in Madras in December 1927 as an institution that would set the standards for Carnatic music. It was inaugurated the next year. In 1929, it started hosting annual conferences on music, which in turn spawned the December music festival of Madras, known popularly as the *Kutchery* season. The format is a series of concerts across the city conducted in an intensive month-long festival that attracts both the cognoscenti and the common people, drinking in the performances, ticketed or free based on economic capacity, equally possessive of their own fest in their own backyard.

Was this feeling of possession truly universal? Or was this an esoteric stratosphere that, through deliberate plan and design, kept some out? It was here that Krishna, a prodigy who gave his first Carnatic concert at the age of 14 at a noon slot in the Music Academy, branched out on the path that has brought him both awards/plaudits and condemnation, in possibly equal measure.

Krishna himself was born in this crucible of culture, in Madras, 48 years ago, and was educated at The School, run by the Krishnamurti Foundation, with a liberal pedagogical outlook, that urges students to "learn and grow in mindful relatedness".

Initially, he got a hand up from his uncle T.T. Vasu, industrialist (son of the former finance minister T. T. Krishnamachari), who was then a member at the Academy. A privilege that he acknowledged as his now famous awakening dawned, and one he sought to question, even counter, shaking at the roots of the system he was a symbiotic part of.

In retrospect, his grooming and education set him on this inevitable path of introspection. But some critics believe it was prep work on his books that set him askew. His first book *Voices Within* (2007), with singer Bombay Jayashri, was a coffee table book on Carnatic music maestros. It was his second book *A Southern Music: The Carnatic Story (2013)* that first hinted at the schisms in Carnatic music that Krishna was beginning to see.

It shows him standing dissatisfied at the edge of that yellow wood, peering at the divergent path. In this clearly polemical book, he strikes the first discordant note: "The environment that pervades Karnatik music makes it very difficult for an atheist to function within its world. There may be a few, but they will find it very difficult to come out in the open and articulate an atheistic narrative for Karnatik music." Later in an interview to *The Hindu,* he clarified: "The music – its form, history, integrity – is what I treasure. What we are stuck with is the *kutcheri*. As far as the *kutcheri* is concerned, I am willing to give it up. Because, after a point, I think the *kutcheri* has not looked at the music but got stuck in its own success story."

Thorny paths

With *Sebastian and Sons*, Krishna was stridently in the other path, as he questioned what he called caste discrimination ingrained in, this time, percussion music.

Critics and colleagues, particularly the purists among them, were outraged. His questions went deeper, beyond form and content, further rocking the foundation that all had found comfort in. No one was truly surprised by what he said, that Carnatic music was in the preserve of one community – the Brahmins. However, to express discomfort with that so openly and with judgement as Krishna did, was inexplicable. Was the innate performer in him at play even as he struck out, craving a different kind of attention? It could be said that reformers tread thorny paths; to shock and shake is the play of someone who wants to usher in change. His unvarnished opinion, nevertheless, ruffled many feathers.

ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

It is also what he did later that seems to have built up this bulwark of opposition. Refusing to participate in the Margazhi season in 2015, could well have been harakiri in that world. Krishna said: "I feel that the music season today has reached a point where music has almost disappeared from it. Perhaps I should say music has fled from it, because of the noise that pervades it." He also alleged corruption and hijacking of the sabhas by certain people. What a dissonance this might have seemed to them.

The Carnatic community perceived his activism as arising from an intrinsic anti-Brahmanism, and was further scandalised by his growing, well-articulated fondness for the Dravidian ideologue Periyar, who was stridently against the Brahmin hegemony of his times. Krishna also performed non-ticketed concerts, besides going out to beaches and streets to take music to the people. In association with the progressive writer Perumal Murugan, he set Periyar's writing, and ancient Tamil texts to Carnatic music.

The Periyar connection

In the letter that was to muddy the waters, vocalist duo Ranjani and Gayathri (RaGa) invoked Krishna's Periyar connection, calling the latter a promoter of Brahmin "genocide", notably not questioning his ability as a musician. Others who pilloried Krishna subsequently too invoked 'dharma' and Hinduism. Even as they disagreed with the politics of Krishna, they allowed that to colour their perception of his musical genius, though Music Academy president N. Murali attested in a note that the choice was 'based on his excellence in music over a long career".

In response, some sophistry followed: RaGa claimed they had not questioned the institution's prerogative to award someone, they had chosen not to perform at an event that the awardee would preside over. Inadvertently, his detractors advanced Krishna's own narrative. In their second letter, RaGa said, "It will be the happiest day for us and for millions of people to see star performers emerge from underprivileged communities and dominate the stage...," reserving their attack, for the Academy this time, calling for reform to start at the top.

In the 1981 Oscar winning movie *Mephisto*, the protagonist, an actor famed for playing the demon Mephistopheles, is shown signing a Faustian pact with the Nazi Party of Germany to advance his own career. He ignores the moral compromises his decision forces on him, but seeks to justify it: "I'm just an actor." Krishna is an artiste who has reached the opposite end of that spectrum, he long stopped being "just a singer".

THE GIST

- Krishna was born in Madras, 48 years ago, and was educated at The School, run by the Krishnamurti Foundation, with a liberal pedagogical outlook
- Initially, he got a hand up from his uncle T.T. Vasu, industrialist (son of the former finance minister T. T. Krishnamachari), who was then a member at the Music Academy
- Krishna, who gave his first Carnatic concert at the age of 14 at a noon slot in the Music Academy, branched out on a different path that has brought him both awards/plaudits and condemnation, in possibly equal measure

Israel's Minister of offence

Yoav Gallant

The Likud leader and member of Netanyahu's war Cabinet threatens to continue and expand the military operations despite a UNSC demand for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza

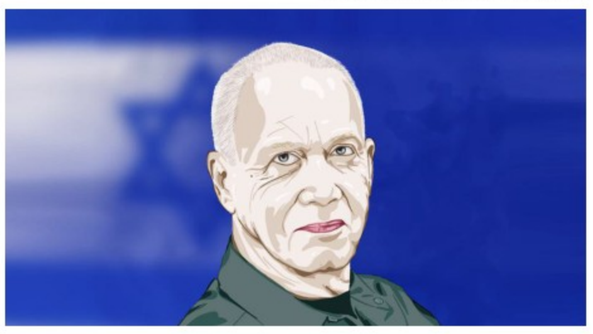
Priyali Prakash

When the U.S. finally abstained from vetoing a UN Security Council resolution demanding for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza on March 25, it prompted a slew of angry remarks from Israel. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cancelled a delegation [which was eventually reinstated] to Washington to express his disappointment, which meant that his Defence Minister Yoav Gallant was left alone in the U.S. to deal with the immediate aftermath of the significant update.

Mr. Gallant, a member of Israel's three-member war Cabinet who infamously likened Palestinians to "human animals" while ordering a complete siege of Gaza after the October 7 Hamas attack, has been instrumental in leading the war on the enclave. A former soldier himself, Mr. Gallant has not always had it easy with Israel's top brass. He was believed to be not particularly close to Mr. Netanyahu previously, who had cancelled his appointment as the Chief of General Staff of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in 2011 due to allegations related to seizure of public lands for personal use.

In 2023, Mr. Netanyahu fired him from the post of Defence Minister after he warned the administration of a security threat due to a proposed judicial overhaul. Mr. Gallant was, however, reinstated following public outrage. A member of the Prime Minister's right-wing Likud Party, Mr. Gallant was among the first senior leaders who spoke against the judicial overhaul which proposed limiting the Supreme Court's powers.

ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R. KUMAR



Born to a Holocaust-survivor mother who arrived in Israel onboard the *SS Exodus* and a father with military roots, Mr. Gallant began his military career as a naval commando with the 13th Flotilla, also called Shayetet 13, which specialises in operating in the sea, on land, and in the air. He spent six years with the unit, before taking a break from the armed forces. Like many Israeli soldiers who travel overseas after their military service periods, Mr. Gallant went to Alaska and worked as a lumberjack for two years before returning to Israel. He first rejoined the Navy before transferring to the IDF.

Mr. Gallant was appointed the military secretary of late Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and was promoted to Major General – setting him up for his future roles within the IDF as well as Israeli politics.

During his tenure with the IDF, he moved up to serve with the Gaza Division. He commanded the 2009 Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in which around 1,400 Palestinians were killed in 22 days. The operation put him in the 2011 race for the IDF Chief of Staff, even as a UN report accused Israel of committing war crimes during the offensive.

Political entry

In 2015, Mr. Gallant moved to politics after over 35 years with the armed forces. He joined the newly formed Kulanu Party, and was elected to the Knesset (Parliament) after the party won 10 seats. He was appointed the Minister of Construction.

By 2019, Mr. Gallant had crossed over to the Likud Party and was appointed the Minister of Education. As the Education Minister, he attempted to cancel the award of Israel Prize to Oded Goldreich, a scientist at the Weizmann Institute, who reportedly supported the "anti-Zionist" Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement.

Mr. Gallant became the Defence Minister in 2022.

In January 2024, he outlined his vision for the future of Gaza, which, according to him, would be an enclave run by a Palestinian body under overall Israeli control. Since the October 7 Hamas attack in which at least 1,200 Israelis were killed and around 240 taken as hostages, Israel has killed more than 32,000 Palestinians in its offensive in Gaza and forced most of the strip's population out of their homes amid continuous bombings. After the U.S. abstained from vetoing the UNSC resolution on March 25, Mr. Gallant has proactively met with leaders in Washington, sometimes referring to supporters as "true friends of Israel" in an apparent dig at U.S. President Joe Biden. And now, he is back in Israel, and is threatening to expand operations against Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon.

The TikTok Taoiseach

Simon Harris

The Fine Gael leader is set to become the youngest Irish Premier at a time when the country is faced with an acute housing crisis and the ruling party is battling dwindling popularity

Joan Sony Cherian

"This is a moment for Fine Gael to reset," said Simon Harris after he was appointed the new leader of the Fine Gael, the centre-right party leading Ireland's ruling coalition, after the shock resignation of Prime Minister Leo Varadkar on March 20. At 37, Mr. Harris is set to become the youngest ever Taoiseach when the Dail (Irish parliament) reconvenes in April. He is determined to let the government run its full term until elections next year.

Mr. Harris was introduced to politics at the very young age of 16 when he, frustrated by the lack of information and guidance for people with autism like his brother, called for a public meeting in his neighbourhood on the issue which led to a lobby/support group for people and children with autism. Even though he calls himself an 'accidental politician', Mr. Harris seems to have paved his way in politics well in advance when one looks at how he rose through the ranks.

Dropping out of college to make his mark in politics, Mr. Harris, at the age of 22, was elected councillor of Wicklow in 2009. He then became a member of parliament at 24, a junior Minister at 27 and held his first ever Cabinet position at 29 as Minister for Health in 2016. From 2020 onwards, he held the post of Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. His strong online presence has earned him the moniker, the 'TikTok Taoiseach'.

ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R. KUMAR

Mr. Harris oversaw the beginning of safety and quarantine precautions when COVID-19 first hit the country. He was applauded for his foresight in mandating necessary safeguards and ordering a total closure of schools and colleges almost a fortnight before the U.K. Another feather in his cap as Health Minister was bringing in the 36th amendment of the Constitution, which came out of the 2018 referendum that called for an upturn of Ireland's near-total ban on abortion.

However, it has not all been smooth-sailing for Mr. Harris. In February, 2019, he faced a no-confidence motion moved by the Sinn Fein, the opposition political party, over the cost-overruns at the new national children's hospital. The hospital, one of the government's biggest construction projects, which was to be built at an estimated cost of €800 million in 2014, rose to almost €1.43 billion by 2019. The opposition called the project a financial mismanagement. Mr. Harris survived the motion and went on to state that the government would build the hospital and "get to the bottom of what has gone wrong".

It was also under his tenure that the cervical cancer smear test scandal broke out. In April 2018, Vicky Phelan, a 43-year old woman, accused the Irish government's health authority of misdiagnosing a routine pap smear she underwent in 2011, which later turned out to be positive for cervical cancer. Many more women (over 200) then came forward sharing stories of how their state-run pap smear tests were given as negative when it should have been flagged as positive, thus depriving these women of an early diagnosis and another chance at life.

Challenges ahead

Mr. Harris was quick to take a dig at the Opposition when he stated in his appointment speech that the "Sinn Féin cannot bear to look back over what Fine Gael has achieved since pulling our economy back from the brink....they cannot handle the truth." Mr. Harris said his party supports small businesses and education, and is committed to making 'work pay'.

However, the youngest ever Irish Premier has his work cut out for him. Ireland faces an extreme housing crisis, topped only by concerns over mass immigration and the record number of asylum seekers and refugees. Additionally, inheriting a three-party coalition leaves very little room for the incumbent Prime Minister to make any major policy changes.

After almost a decade of Fine Gael rule, Sinn Fein has the support of 28% voters, almost eight percentage points ahead of the ruling party.

Whether it be 'resetting' the party or forming a new Cabinet, it remains to be seen what impact Mr. Harris can have in his short tenure as Prime Minister.

BEIJING

As Sri Lanka PM concludes visit, China vows to help island nation

AFP

China has said it would continue to support Sri Lanka, as the crisis-hit island nation's Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardane on Saturday wrapped up a visit to Beijing to try to finalise a debt restructuring deal. Among other projects, the two sides agreed to "to promote the Port City Colombo and Hambantota Project". AFP

AUSTRIA

17 injured as river cruise ship hits concrete passageway

AFP

17 passengers were hurt when a Bulgarian river cruise ship lost steering and hit the sides of a lock on the Danube in Austria. The ship with 142 aboard, most of them from Germany, temporarily lost power to its electronics system and became unsteerable as it passed through narrow locks at 9:45 p.m. on Friday. AP

KATHMANDU

On Tibet visit, Nepal official calls for opening China border points

ISTOCKPHOTO

Nepal has urged China to reopen the 14 traditional border points with the Tibetan Autonomous Region not just for bilateral trade and commerce but for the movement of people too. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha is on his first visit to China after taking over office earlier in the month. PTI

CAIRO

France, Jordan, Egypt Ministers call for 'permanent' Gaza ceasefire

AFP

The French, Egyptian and Jordanian foreign ministers called on Saturday for an "immediate and permanent ceasefire" in Gaza and the release of all hostages held by Palestinian militants. The three Ministers renewed their governments' support for the UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA. AFP

Asia should prevent world from becoming an arena for geopolitical fighting, says China

Countries in Asia should jointly oppose unilateralism and self-serving practices, oppose picking sides and bloc confrontation and prevent the region and the world from becoming an arena for geopolitical fighting, says Zhao Leji, Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee

Nikhil M. Babu
HAINAN

China's top legislator Zhao Leji has said that Asia has endured both "hot and cold" wars and they should prevent the world from becoming an arena for "geopolitical fighting", and welcomed all countries to board China's "express train" of development.

Mr. Zhao, Chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, was speaking at the opening session of the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference 2024, an international organisation of 29 member states, including many leaders from Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) countries such as Sri Lanka.

Speaking at the same session, on March 28, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Dinesh Gunewardane, said that Sri Lanka's port development has taken a new turn of "advanced" development with the assistance of China and it will "change the present scenario".

New vision: Zhao Leji speaks at the opening ceremony of Boao Forum of Asia in southern China's Hainan province on Thursday. AP

A day earlier, the Sri Lankan Prime Minister had said had pledged to develop the island nation's strategic deep sea port and the capital's airport after talks with his counterpart in Beijing, according to AFP.

"Colombo port will become a hub of a newly developed port with financial instruments that could cater to the new demands that are growing among ourselves, among our countries, for development and investment, which is essential. This will change the present scenario from East Asia to East Africa, and the blue seas that we all could work together for the future that we face in a successful and a great joint programme are what we look forward to," Mr. Gunawardena said.

Sri Lanka's southern sea port of Hambantota was handed to a Chinese state-owned company in 2017 on a 99-year lease for $1.12 billion. India and the U.S. are both concerned that a Chinese foothold at the port could boost China's naval advantage in the Indian Ocean.

In December 2023, amid repeated messages from New Delhi, Colombo announced a year-long moratorium on foreign research vessels visiting Sri Lankan waters.

Walk together

Mr. Zhao said that Asian countries have the fine tradition of helping each other out in trying times and they have overcome one difficulty after another on their paths to development.

"Now in a phase of clamours for division and confrontation, it is essential that we stay independent, seek strength through unity, and continue to walk side by side with each other. (We should) jointly oppose unilateralism and self-serving practices, oppose picking sides and bloc confrontation and prevent this region and the world from becoming an arena for geopolitical fighting," he said.

Mr. Zhao called on all countries to transcend the "old mentality" of bloc confrontation and zero-sum games and practice genuine multilateralism to jointly build an open world economy. "We must oppose trade protectionism and all forms of erecting barriers, decoupling, or severing of supply chains," he said.

Hot and cold wars

Mr. Zhao said people in Asia have endured both hot and cold wars, as well as hardships and tribulations, leading them to deeply cherish the value of peace. He added that China will make it more convenient for foreigners to work, study, and travel in China.

The BFA, which concluded on Friday, was held in Hainan – the southern most and the only tropical island province of China – in the South China Sea, not very far from the Philippines, amidst an ongoing tension between the two countries.

(This correspondent attended the Boao Forum for Asia at the invitation of the China Public Diplomacy Association)

5 killed, dozens hurt in Gaza amid chaos during aid delivery

Agence France-Presse
GAZA STRIP

Red Crescent said it happened after thousands were waiting for 15 trucks of food items

The Palestine Red Crescent said five persons were killed and dozens wounded by gunfire and a stampede during an aid delivery Saturday in northern Gaza, where famine looms.

Video footage showed a convoy of trucks moving past burning debris near the distribution point in pre-dawn darkness as people shout and gunfire echoes – some of which was warning shots, witnesses said.

Deadly roundabout

The Red Crescent said it happened after thousands of people gathered for the arrival of around 15 trucks of flour and other food, which was supposed to be handed out at Gaza City's Kuwait roundabout, in the territory's north.

The roundabout has been the scene of several chaotic and deadly aid distribution incidents, including one on March 23 in which the Hamas-run government said 21 people were killed by Israeli fire – a charge Israel denied.

The Red Crescent said three of the five killed early on Saturday had been shot.

Eyewitnesses said that Gazans overseeing the aid delivery shot in the air, but Israeli troops in the area also opened fire and some moving trucks hit people trying to get the food.

The Israeli military said it "has no record of the incident described."

A UN-backed report warned on March 19 that half of Gazans are experiencing "catastrophic" hunger, with famine projected to hit the north of the territory unless there is urgent intervention.

Zardaris supersede Sharifs with most legislators from a family

Press Trust of India
LAHORE

Wth six members, the Zardaris have overtaken the Sharifs to hold the record for having the most number of lawmakers from a family in Pakistani politics after President Asif Ali Zardari and slain former Premier Benazir Bhutto's youngest daughter Aseefa was elected unopposed as a member of parliament.

Ms. Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, 31, who is set to become the First Lady, had filed a nomination for the National Assembly seat NA-207 from the Shaheed Benazirabad (formerly Nawabshah) area of Sindh province for the bye-election scheduled for next month.

Ms. Bhutto Zardari was elected unopposed after three candidates who had filed papers against her withdrew their names from the contest. It left her with no challenger and she was declared a winner in her maiden electoral contest on Friday. The seat was vacated by her father Asif Ali Zardari after he was elected President.

Malaysia store attacked for offering 'Allah' socks

Agence France-Presse
KUALA LUMPUR

A Molotov cocktail was thrown at a store belonging to a Malaysian chain that had offered socks bearing the word "Allah" for sale, the police said on Saturday.

The incident came days after the mini-market chain's executives were charged with hurting religious feelings over the sale of the socks at another of its stores.

The police chief in Kuantan city in Malaysia's east, said the KK Supermart branch had been hit just before dawn, causing a small fire at the entrance of the store.

Employees put out the fire with an extinguisher and no injuries were reported, he said.

Russia unleashes new attacks as Ukraine sees another reshuffle

Associated Press
KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy dismissed a long-time aide and several advisers on Saturday in a continuing reshuffle while Russia unleashed fresh attacks overnight.

Mr. Zelenskyy dismissed top aide Serhiy Shefir from his post of first assistant, where he had served since 2019. The Ukrainian President also let go of three advisers, and two presidential representatives overseeing volunteer activities and soldiers' rights.

No explanation was given immediately for the latest changes in a wide-reaching personnel shake-up over recent months. It included the dismissal on Tuesday of Oleksii Danilov, who served as secretary of the National Security and Defence Council.

Ukraine said on Saturday that Russia launched 12 Shahed drones overnight and fired four missiles.

Russia unleashed a barrage of 38 missiles, 75 airstrikes and 98 attacks from multiple rocket launchers over the last 24 hours

Sport

Rewarding day: Nakajima emerged stronger after a topsy-turvy performance. GETTY IMAGES

Nakajima enlarges lead to four strokes; Ahlawat stays six behind

INDIAN OPEN

Rakesh Rao
GURUGRAM

A brilliant final-hole birdie enlarged overnight leader Keita Nakajima's lead to four shots at -18 over the duo of Romain Langasque and gate-crasher Gavin Green.

Though a yet-to-trail Nakajima goes into the final day of the $2.25 million Hero Indian Open here with a comfortable lead, a dramatic twist on Sunday cannot be ruled out. At least four players kept alive their chances of lifting the coveted trophy.

Among the eight Indians making the 'cut' at 143, Veer Ahlawat remained the best. He stayed six strokes behind the leader after a three-under 69. Manu Gandas (70) spoilt a strong back-nine finish after two late bogeys, in succession.

Nakajima's two-stroke lead evaporated on the eighth-hole after he sent his tee-shot into the water for a bogey while nearest contender Langasque found his fourth birdie to catch up at 16-under.

To the credit of the Japanese, he regained focus to rebuild his two-stroke lead after birdies on the 11th and 12th.

Langasque, desperate for birdies, erred on the 13th to fall back by three strokes and slipped further when he double-bogeyed the 16th.

Nakajima, too, failed to crack the 14th for the third day in succession and bogeyed. But he stayed ahead at -17 saving par on the 15th and consolidated his lead by adding a last-hole birdie. Lagasque, too, finished with a birdie.

While all the attention was on the two front-runners, Gavin Green of Malaysia made a charge. He shot a stunning, flawless 64 to jump to the tied-second spot after three birdies on the last four holes. On the front-nine, Green found three birdies and an eagle-3 on the eighth hole to raise visions of a strong finish.

On Sunday, Green could well be the man to watch.

Leading scores:

198: Keita Nakajima (Jpn) (65, 65, 68); **202:** Romain Lagasque (Fra) (66, 66, 70), Gavin Green (Mal) (72, 66, 64); **203:** Matteo Manassero (Ita) (65, 68, 70), Ko Jeong Weon (Fra) (67, 67, 69).

Other Indians: 208: Manu Gandas (73, 65, 70); **210:** Aman Raj (68, 68, 74); **211:** Karandeep Kochhar (68, 70, 73); **212:** Shubhankar Sharma (70, 70, 72); **214:** Rashid Khan (71, 69, 74); **219:** Gaganjeet Bhullar (70, 69, 80); and **220:** Jairaj Singh Sandhu (72, 70, 78).

Prominent Indians who missed the 'cut': 144: Khalin Joshi (71, 73); **145:** Anirban Lahiri (77, 68); **146:** Shiv Kapur (74, 72); **148:** Udayan Mane (72, 76); **149:** Rahil Gangjee (71, 78), Ajeetesh Sandhu (74, 75); **150:** S. Chikkarangappa (78, 72).

Leverkusen edges Hoffenheim

EURO LEAGUES

Reuters
LEVERKUSEN

Bundesliga leader Bayer Leverkusen scored twice late in the game with Robert Andrich and Patrik Schick to earn a 2-1 comeback win over Hoffenheim on Saturday and edge closer to the league title.

Leverkusen, unbeaten in 39 matches across all competitions this season, is on 73 points with seven matches left.

The results: Premier League: Newcastle 4 (Isak 6-pen, 77-pen, Barnes 83, 90) bt West Ham 3 (Antonio 21, Kudus 45+10, Bowen 48); Bournemouth 2 (Solanke 64, Coleman 90+1-og) bt Everton 1 (Beto 87); Chelsea 2 (Palmer 44-pen, Palmer 78) drew with Burnley 2 (Cullen 47, O'Shea 81); Nottingham Forest 1 (Wood 61) drew with Crystal Palace 1 (Mateta 11); Tottenham 2 (Kabore 51-og, Son 86) bt Luton Town 1 (Chong 3); Sheffield United 3 (Brereton 58, 70, McBurnie 68) drew with Fulham 3 (Palhinha 62, De Cordova-Reid 86, Muniz 90+3).

LaLiga: Getafe 0 lost to Sevilla 1 (Ramos 5).

Bundesliga: RB Leipzig 0 drew with Mainz 05 0; Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Andrich 88, Schick 90+1) bt Hoffenheim 1 (Beier 33); Eintracht Frankfurt 0 drew with Union Berlin 0; Borussia M'gladbach 0 lost to Freiburg 3 (Gregoritsch 7, Rohl 47, Doan 57); Werder Bremen 0 lost to Wolfsburg 2 (Lacroix 45+4, Majer 84).

On Friday: LaLiga: Cadiz 1 (Navarro 51) bt Granada 0.

Serie A: Napoli 0 lost to Atalanta 3 (Miranchuk 26, Scamacca 45, Koopmeiners 88).

LIGHTNING

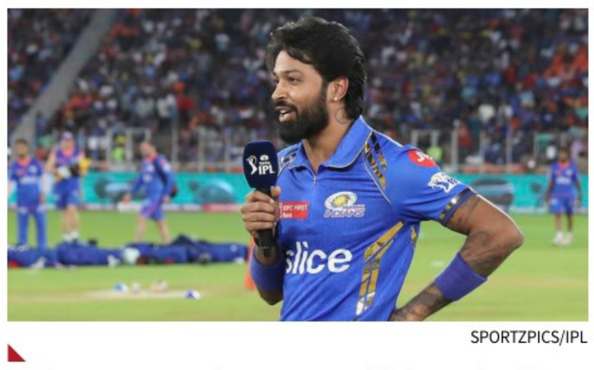
LSG's Mayank cranks up pace, catches the eye on IPL debut

AFP

Mayank Yadav, the architect of LSG's win over PBKS on Saturday, represents Delhi in domestic cricket. In the 2023 Deodhar Trophy, he was the joint second-highest wicket-taker with 12 wickets in five innings while representing North Zone. The pacer registered 155.8 kph on the speed gun and clocked consistently in the high 140s.

CROSSING THE LINE

Fan wars should never take ugly route: Ashwin on Hardik incident



SPORTZPICS/IPL

R. Ashwin came out in vehement support of the besieged Hardik Pandya after the MI captain was subjected to boos from the fans. Ashwin blamed this to the prevailing atmosphere of "fan wars" and "cinema culture". "Fan wars should never go this ugly. One should remember which country these players represent."

FOND MEMORIES

Cummins and Travis head back to their place of conquest

VIJAY SONEJI

Australia's World Cup-winning captain Cummins, *left, in pic,* and Player-of-the-Final Head will return to the Narendra Modi Stadium, where they won the global title last November. "They had a smile. If you can associate a place with something that was good, it gives you a positive mindset," said SRH assistant coach Simon Helmot.

MOVING ON...

Kohli, Gambhir hug each other during RCB's clash against KKR

PTI

The IPL clash between RCB and KKR witnessed a heartfelt moment with Virat Kohli and Gautam Gambhir embracing each other. During RCB's encounter versus Lucknow in IPL 2023, Kohli and Gambhir got into a heated argument. In 2013, the two got into a heated fight, even pushing each other before being separated by teammates.

Mayank Yadav breathes fire as LSG subdues PBKS

De Kock, Pooran and Krunal propel the Lucknow side to 199 with the West Indian leading the team in place of 'Impact Player' Rahul who opens the innings but fails to get going

IPL-17

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LUCKNOW

He is quick. He is lightning quick, actually.

Say hello to Mayank Yadav. He is that rare Indian cricketer: the genuine fast bowler. And he announced his arrival in stunning fashion.

Not merely the 21-year-old bowled the fastest ball of the season, he also took the first three wickets of Punjab Kings to help Lucknow Super Giants register a 21-run win – its first in the 17th edition of the IPL – at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Stadium on Saturday night.

Top shows: De Kock gave Super Giants an energetic start with a half-century while Mayank Yadav's fiery spell derailed Kings' chase. SANDEEP SAXENA

Spectacular start

Chasing 200 – that would have beaten the record for the highest IPL total at this venue, bettering the one made in the first innings of this match – the visitors were off to a spectacular start.

Captain Shikhar Dhawan (70, 50b, 7x4, 3x6) and Jonny Bairstow (42, 29b, 3x4, 3x6) put on 102 inside 12 overs.

The debutant Mayank had come on in the 10th over and his first ball clocked 147.1 kmph. The third ball was 150 kmph. And he became faster.

The first ball of his second over recorded 155.8 kmph – the fastest of the season. Off the fourth, he had Bairstow caught at deep mid-wicket.

In his next two overs, he had the Impact Player Prabhsimran Singh and then Jitesh Sharma also caught. He finished with three for 27. No fast bowler since Umran Malik has excited Indian cricket as much.

Losing its way

When Mohsin Khan removed Dhawan and Sam Curran off successive balls, the Kings slumped to 141 for five in 16.3 overs. It was going to be a tough ask from then on.

Earlier, the opening scene of the match proved a bit of a surprise. Out came Nicholas Pooran for the toss and announced that the regular captain K.L. Rahul would play as an Impact Player.

Rahul, whose straight six off Arshdeep Singh was one of the shots of this IPL so far, put on 35 for the first wicket with Quinton de Kock 54 (38b, 5x4, 2x6) inside four overs. Pooran's 42 (21b, 3x4 3x6) and Krunal Pandya's 43 not out (22b, 4x4, 2x6) ensured the LSG innings retained its momentum.

The stage was then set for a new star.

SCOREBOARD

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS
Quinton de Kock c Jitesh b Arshdeep 54 *(38b, 5x4, 2x6)*, K.L. Rahul c Bairstow b Arshdeep 15 *(9b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Devdutt Padikkal c Dhawan b Curran 9 *(6b, 2x4)*, Marcus Stoinis b Rahul Chahar 19 *(12b, 2x6)*, Nicholas Pooran b Rabada 42 *(21b, 3x4, 3x6)*, Ayush Badoni c Bairstow b Curran 8 *(10b)*, Krunal Pandya (not out) 43 *(22b, 4x4, 2x6)*, Ravi Bishnoi c sub (Tanay) b Curran 0 *(1b)*, Mohsin Khan run out 2 *(1b)*, Naveen-ul-Haq (**Impact Player in place of K.L. Rahul**) (not out) 0 *(0b)*; Extras (b-1, lb-1, w-5): 7; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 199.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-35 (Rahul, 3.5 overs), 2-45 (Padikkal, 5.1), 3-78 (Stoinis, 8.4), 4-125 (de Kock, 13.1), 5-146 (Pooran, 15.1), 6-189 (Badoni, 18.4), 7-189 (Bishnoi, 18.5), 8-197 (Mohsin, 19.4).

PUNJAB KINGS BOWLING
Curran 4-0-28-3, Arshdeep 3-0-30-2, Rabada 4-0-38-1, Rahul Chahar 3-0-42-1, Brar 2-0-14-0, Harshal 4-0-45-0.

PUNJAB KINGS
Shikhar Dhawan c de Kock b Mohsin 70 *(50b, 7x4, 3x6)*, Jonny Bairstow c Stoinis b Mayank Yadav 42 *(29b, 3x4, 3x6)*, Prabhsimran Singh (**Impact Player in place of Arshdeep**) c Naveen b Mayank Yadav 19 *(7b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Jitesh Sharma c Naveen b Mayank Yadav 6 *(9b, 1x4)*, Liam Livingstone (not out) 28 *(17b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Sam Curran c Pooran b Mohsin 0 *(1b)*, Shashank Singh (not out) 9 *(7b, 1x4)*; Extras (lb-2, w-2): 4; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 178.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-102 (Bairstow, 11.4), 2-128 (Prabhsimran, 13.3), 3-139 (Jitesh, 15.4), 4-141 (Dhawan, 16.2), 5-141 (Curran, 16.3).

SUPER GIANTS BOWLING
M. Siddharth 2-0-21-0, Naveen 4-0-43-0, Mohsin 4-0-34-2, Krunal 3-0-26-0, Bishnoi 3-0-25-0, Mayank Yadav 4-0-27-3.

Toss: LSG; **PoM:** Mayank Yadav.
LSG won by 21 runs.

Next assignment

LSG: April 2 vs **RCB**
Bengaluru, 7.30 p.m.

PBKS: April 4 vs **GT**
Ahmedabad, 7.30 p.m..

May consider Shaw if he impresses: Ponting

S. Dipak Ragav
VISAKHAPATNAM

As Delhi Capitals searches for its first win of the tournament following defeats in the opening two games, the decision to bench Prithvi Shaw has come under scrutiny. But with its batting line-up appearing thin, head coach Ricky Ponting said Shaw could be considered for selection for the match against Chennai Super Kings.

"Our team make-up in the first game without (Anrich) Nortje allowed us to play four overseas batsmen. By doing that we pushed Mitchell Marsh to the top of the order, which pushed Prithvi out. We will look at Prithvi at training today and see how well he plays. If he impresses everybody, we will consider him for tomorrow (Sunday)," said Ponting.

"We feel that a really good game is just around the corner for us. In fact, I am sure we will have a more positive intent going into this game," added the former Australian skipper.

Meanwhile, CSK's bowling consultant, Eric Simmons, praised Ruturaj Gaikwad's captaincy in the first two matches. "He is a very calm individual and a great student of the game. "As a captain, you need to understand the game and why you need to make those changes," he said.

In-form Super Kings has the edge over Capitals

S. Dipak Ragav
VISAKHAPATNAM

After two defeats on the road, Delhi Capitals will look for comfort at its temporary home ground for two games at the ACA-VDCA Stadium as it gears up for a stern test against table-topper Chennai Super Kings on Sunday.

The hosts will be acutely aware of the perils of not getting early wins on the board.

In 2023, their campaign was derailed by five losses out of the gate, from which they could never recover, and finished a lowly ninth in the table.

Over-reliant

Even as skipper Rishabh Pant is slowly finding his feet, the Capitals' batting seems over-reliant on openers David Warner and Mitchell Marsh.

It will be interesting to see if the team plays destructive opener Prithvi Shaw to strengthen its batting line-up.

Capitals have a few headaches even on the bowling front, with the pacers leaking runs in the death overs in the first two matches.

Well-rounded squad

Meanwhile, Super Kings will look to continue their winning run and hold the edge, thanks to a well-rounded squad.

The depth in the batting line-up has allowed its batters to be aggressive throughout the innings, putting the opposition bowlers under the pump.

Three left-handers in the top six, including the in-form Shivam Dube, also give the Chennai outfit a tactical advantage to neutralise Capitals' left-arm spin duo of Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel.

The Super Kings' new overseas picks have all performed admirably in the first two games and the only challenge is whether they would be able to adapt quickly to the conditions away from home.

Zooming in: The way Dube has been hitting the ball, it seems he sees it as big as this one. K.R. DEEPAK

TODAY'S MATCHES

GT vs SRH	DC vs CSK
Ahmedabad, 3.30 p.m.	**Visakhapatnam,** 7.30 p.m.
HEAD-TO-HEAD	HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 3	Played: 29
GT 2 | SRH 1	DC 10 | CSK 19
PREVIOUS MEETING: GT won by 34 runs, 2023	PREVIOUS MEETING: CSK won by 77 runs, 2023

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

Titans, Sunrisers will look to surmount bowling woes

N. Sudarshan
AHMEDABAD

With a win and a loss each, there is little to separate Gujarat Titans and Sunrisers Hyderabad. Yet, it is the latter that will take the field with more confidence when they meet at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Sunday.

GT, after opening with a nervous six-run win over Mumbai Indians, suffered a 63-run drubbing at Chennai Super Kings' hands that sent its net run-rate south. SRH, following the narrow four-run defeat to Kolkata Knight Riders, raked up IPL's highest-ever total (277) before going on to beat MI by 31 runs.

Stark contrast

The contrast is especially stark in the way the teams have batted.

GT has found middle-overs acceleration tough, with the likes of Sai Sudharsan, Vijay Shankar, Azmatullah Omarzai and David Miller unable to bat with freedom.

Australian wicketkeeper-batter Matthew Wade will be welcomed back into the squad, but to fit him in, the think-tank will have much tinkering to do.

For SRH, on the other hand, Abhishek Sharma, Heinrich Klaasen, Travis Head and Aiden Markram have been at their marauding best, helping their side breach the 200-run mark twice in succession.

Aiming high: Gill will look to pull his weight while Abhishek will be keen to rock again. VIJAY SONEJI

Points Table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Chennai Super Kings	2	2	0	4	1.979
Kolkata Knight Riders	2	2	0	4	1.047
Rajasthan Royals	2	2	0	4	0.800
Sunrisers Hyderabad	2	1	1	2	0.675
Lucknow Super Giants	2	1	1	2	0.025
Punjab Kings	3	1	2	2	-0.337
Royal Challengers	3	1	2	2	-0.711
Gujarat Titans	2	1	1	2	-1.425
Delhi Capitals	2	0	2	0	-0.528
Mumbai Indians	2	0	2	0	-0.925

Bowling is an area where both GT and SRH have to improve. A better performance will be expected from the seasoned Umesh Yadav, whom GT is banking on in the absence of Mohammed Shami but has gone for more than 10-an-over. SRH, meanwhile, will look to not concede in excess of 200 again.

This being an afternoon tie, dew will have negligible effect. But the sweltering summer heat will test endurance levels, with temperatures expected to hover around 40°C around start-time.

You have to back the players, says Kirsten

N. Sudarshan
AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans batting coach and mentor Gary Kirsten was firm in his belief that his team's top-order will be back to its fiery best, ahead of the Sunday afternoon clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad here.

In two outings so far, GT has come up with middling totals – 168 against Mumbai Indians and 143 against Chennai Super Kings – and has been unable to switch gears after decent starts.

"Our top-order has done well for us [in the past]," insisted Kirsten. "Sai Sudharsan got 96 (47b) in the final last year. If you blow hot and cold and get into crisis-management because you haven't won a game, you can get into trouble very quickly.

"It is a high-risk game, and while players make an error or don't score, you have to back [them] believing what they can do."

SRH, meanwhile, has scored runs by the truckload, but has also conceded aplenty. "We would look at improving our defensive bowling," said assistant coach Simon Helmot. "When we won in 2016, good defensive economy was one of our best aspects. But with the Impact Player rule, it is difficult. A new batter comes to the crease and teams are still attacking."

INBRIEF

Sri Lanka's top-order makes merry on opening day

A top-order batting blitz brought Sri Lanka to 314 for four and left the tourists firmly in command on the first day of the second and final Test against Bangladesh in Chittagong on Saturday.

The scores: Sri Lanka 314/4 in 90 overs (Kusal Mendis 93, Dimuth Karunaratne 86, Nishan Madushka 57, Dinesh Chandimal batting 34) vs Bangladesh. **Toss**: Sri Lanka.

Clinical East Zone marches into the semifinals

East Zone romped to an innings and 120-run win over North East Zone and booked a spot in the semifinals of the Senior Women's Inter Zonal Multi-Day Trophy in Pune on Saturday. It bowled out North East for 108 and 157 in the two innings after putting up 385 for eight declared.

Rithvik Bollipalli & Niki Poonacha in Challenger final

Rithvik Bollipalli and Niki Poonacha defeated Ryan Seggerman and Patrik Trhac of USA 6-3, 6-4 in the doubles semifinals of the $82,000 Challenger tennis at San Luis Potosi, Mexico. In the $40,000 ITF women's in Kofu (Japan), Rutuja Bhosale and Ankita Raina lost 6-3, 7-5 in the doubles final to Erina Hayashi and Saki Imamura.

The results: €148,625 Challenger, Naples: Doubles, quarterfinals: Theo Arribage (Fra) & Victor Cornea (Rou) bt Arjun Kadhe & Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan 6-3, 6-2.
$82,000 Challenger, San Luis Potosi (Mexico): Doubles, semifinals: Rithvik Bollipalli & Niki Poonacha bt Ryan Seggerman & Patrik Trhac (USA) 6-3, 6-4.
$40,000 ITF women, Kofu (Japan): Doubles, final: Erina Hayashi & Saki Imamura (Jpn) bt Rutuja Bhosale & Ankita Raina 6-3, 7-5.
$25,000 ITF women, Terrassa (Spain): Doubles, final: Nika Radisic (Slo) & Anita Wagner (Bih) bt Yvonne Cavalle-Reimers (Esp) & Vasanti Shinde 7-5, 7-6(7).

Sinner to meet Dimitrov in Miami Open final

Italy's Jannik Sinner destroyed defending champion Daniil Medvedev 6-1, 6-2 in just 69 minutes on Friday to reach the final of the ATP Miami Open, where he will take on Grigor Dimitrov. Bulgarian Dimitrov made his third Masters 1000 series final beating fourth-seeded Alexander Zverev 6-4, 6-7(7), 6-4. Dimitrov will return to the top ten for the first time since 2018, his 260 week wait is the third longest in history.

National champion Sitwala enters pre-quarterfinals

National champion Dhruv Sitwala defeated Arun Agrawal 979-399 and Dhvaj Haria beat Englishman Rob Hall 1055-425 in the pre-quarterfinals of the all-India CCI Billiards Classic in Mumbai on Saturday.

The results (pre-quarterfinals): David Causier (Eng) bt Kamal Chawla 1422-306; S. Shrikrishna bt Sourav Kothari 492-473; Raayan Razmi bt Siddharth Parikh 606-519; Dhvaj Haria bt Rob Hall (Eng) 1055-425; Dhruv Sitwala bt Arun Agrawal 979-399; Peter Gilchrist (Sin) bt Rohan Jambusaria 900-493; Peter Sheehan (Eng) bt Rupesh Shah 738-583; Pankaj Advani bt Aditya Agrawal 1236-428.

LIVE TELECAST

Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka: 2nd Test, day 2, FanCode, 9.30 a.m.
Golf: Indian Open, FanCode, 12 p.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 3.30 & 7.30 p.m.
LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 5.30, 7.45, 10 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Monday)
Premier League: SS Select 1, 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 6.30 & 9 p.m.
Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 7, 9 & 11 p.m.
ISL: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.

Lucky to have played with two greats of world cricket, says Green

Kohli and Rohit are both legends of the game and they are equally happy to give you a lot of their time, says the Australia and RCB all-rounder

IPL-17

Achal Ashwin
BENGALURU

Kolkata Knight Riders cruised past Royal Challengers Bengaluru's 183-run target with 19 balls to spare in their IPL game here on Friday, but RCB all-rounder Cameron Green insisted that his team was "very, very happy" with its score.

In a virtual media interaction on Saturday, Green also spoke about playing professional cricket while coping with his chronic kidney disease. The Australian recently visited the Bangalore Kidney Foundation here to raise awareness about the disease. *Excerpts:*

RCB scoring 182 against KKR: I think we did really well to get 182 on that wicket. It was a bit above par for the conditions we faced. The pitch was a bit tough. Virat (Kohli) summed up the conditions well and batted beautifully. We were very, very happy with 182, but you also know that it is easy to chase it at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium. Conditions do change from innings to innings. A lot of credit has to go to KKR for the way they batted.

Batting with Kohli: I've been very impressed with how much energy he has to help others. I've questioned him about certain things. For example, sometimes he taps the bat on the ground, and other times he keeps it up. He told me that he taps the bat when he wants to hit the ball far.

Sharing the dressing room with Kohli and Rohit Sharma (when Green was at Mumbai Indians): They're both great for the game. I'm pinching myself as I have been lucky to have played with two greats of world cricket. They are equally happy to give you a lot of their time.

Coping with chronic kidney condition: It is challenging, especially in India, as there are limited food options. With my condition, I have to look after my salt and protein. I've had some challenging times on the cricket field too. There have been a few times when I'm in a really good position in the game, with just half an hour to go to get my team over the line. And then I get a cramp. I get emotional because you feel like it is all against you. You blame yourself and feel guilty for holding the team back.

Rub of positivity: Green says he has been impressed with the energy levels Kohli has in helping others. PTI

AIFF executive committee member arrested for alleged physical assault on women players

FOOTBALL

Neeladri Bhattacharjee
CHENNAI

Indian football was rocked by further controversy when Deepak Sharma, a member of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) Executive Committee was arrested on Saturday evening for allegedly assaulting two women players of Khad FC physically in a drunken state.

The incident took place on Thursday night (March 28) in Mapusa, Goa. The players had filed a complaint on Friday with the AIFF and later an FIR with the police.

Himachal Pradesh's Khad FC is currently playing in the inaugural edition of Indian Women's League 2.

After the Goa Football Federation (GFA) filed a complaint on Friday, the local police started investigating the case against Deepak, who is also the general secretary of the Himachal Pradesh Football Association.

"Acting on this complaint, an FIR was registered at the Mapusa Police Station under sections 354A, 323 and 341 of the Indian Penal Code. Also, in this case, the main accused, who has been identified as Deepak Sharma, has been arrested," Akshat Kaushal, the Superintendent of Police of North Goa, said.

The AIFF, after an urgent meeting under president Kalyan Chaubey on Saturday, formed a three-member committee to submit a report on the issue in seven days.

Taking cognizance of the matter, Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur tweeted, "The Ministry of Sports has taken a serious note of an alleged physical assault upon women footballers by an official during the ongoing Indian Women's League in Goa."

The incident became public on the morning of March 29 and the match commissioner, Sujesh Rajan, reached out to the GFA for quick action.

"In the morning, I got a call from the Match Commissioner saying that there was a complaint," Jonathan D'Sousa, the vice president of GFA, told *The Hindu*.

"So, the General Secretary and the Match Commissioner went to the place where the girls were staying and they did a preliminary investigation. They forwarded their report to the AIFF."

Deepak was the only male in the contingent, as confirmed by GFA's secretary Adlear D'Cruz, who was one of the people to conduct the preliminary investigation.

"He (had) started drinking right from the time they (started travelling) in the tempo traveller in Himachal Pradesh.

"He was drinking openly and was the only male in the vehicle and was fully drunk right from that day," he told *The Hindu*.

"He assaulted both of them and three girls were witnesses.

"He just barged into the room and started assaulting them."

The girls had also accused the team manager, Nandita Sharma – who is the accused's wife – of 'defending' Deepak.

Sikki-Sumeeth pair bows out in semifinals

SPAIN MASTERS

Press Trust of India
MADRID

India's challenge in the Madrid Spain Masters Super 300 tournament ended here on Saturday after the mixed doubles pair of N. Sikki Reddy and B. Sumeeth Reddy crashed out in the semifinals.

The Indonesian pair of Rinov Rivaldy and Pitha Haningtyas Mentari did not have to work too hard as they prevailed 21-17, 21-12 over the Indian duo in a contest lasting only 29 minutes.

This was the first meeting between the two mixed doubles pairs.

N. Sikki Reddy and B. Sumeeth Reddy had earlier beaten Indonesia's Rehan Naufal Kusharjanto and Lisa Ayu Kusumawati in the quarterfinal on Friday, beating the fourth seeded pair 14-21, 21-11, 21-17.

On Friday, Supanida Katethong defeated P.V. Sindhu 24-26, 21-17, 22-20.

The results: (Indians unless specified):
Mixed doubles: (semifinals): Rinov Rivaldy & Pitha Mentari (Ina) beat N. Sikki Reddy & B. Sumeet Reddy 21-17, 21-12.
On Friday:
Mixed doubles: (Quarterfinals): N. Sikki Reddy & B. Sumeet Reddy beat Rehan Kusharjanto & Lisa Kusumawati (Ina) 14-21, 21-11, 21-17.
Women's singles: (Quarterfinals): Supanida Katethong (Tha) beat P.V. Sindhu 24-26, 21-17, 22-20.
Men's doubles: Junaidi Arif & Roy Yap (Hkg) beat M.R. Arjun & Dhruv Kapila 21-19, 21-23, 21-17.
Women's doubles: Chia Hsin & Teng Hsun (Tai) beat Ashwini Ponnappa & Tanisha Crasto 21-23, 21-17.

Masterclass in defence: OFC's Ahmed Jahouh, right, and BFC's Siva Sakthi are up against each other in a game which saw neither side give an inch. K. MURALI KUMAR

Goalkeepers hog limelight in BFC-OFC stalemate

ISL

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Goal-line clearances and sharp goalkeeper saves were the order of the day, as Bengaluru FC (BFC) and Odisha FC kept clean sheets in their ISL match at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Saturday.

BFC (22 points) is sixth on the points table, while OFC is third. The result handed a jolt to Odisha's hopes of clinching the League Winners Shield, as the side is now five points behind leader Mumbai City FC (41 points).

The backline scrambles began early, when Odisha defender Mourtada Fall cleared Oliver Drost's shot off the line.

BFC goalkeeper Gurpreet Sandhu was then called into action, sticking his leg out to parry Jerry Lalrinzuala's firm strike.

Odisha's Roy Krishna had the best chance of the game, when he found himself in a one-on-one battle with Sandhu.

Krishna, a former BFC player, got past Sandhu, but Shankar Sampingiraj sprinted back to make a desperate last ditch block.

More defensive excellence was in store in the second-half, when Odisha's Amey Ranawade booted a dangerous chip from Javier Hernandez in front of the goal.

Odisha custodian Amrinder Singh also made a couple of strong saves, denying an invigorated BFC in the final few minutes.

The result:
BFC 0 drew with Odisha FC 0.
At Jamshedpur: Jamshedpur FC 1 (Javier 45) drew with Kerala Blasters 1 (Diamantakos 23)

Japan beats India in title clash

Sports Bureau

Japan defeated India 2-0 in the final of the WJT Asia-Oceania under-14 boys tennis tournament at Kuching (Malaysia) on Saturday.

India had assured itself of a berth in the World Group competition to be staged at a later date in Europe.

The results (final):
Japan bt India 2-0
(Shintaro Ogaki bt Tavish Pahwa 6-2, 6-3.
Takahiro Kawaguchi bt Hruthik Katakam 1-6, 6-4, 6-4).

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Mangalore clinches title
Ashwij scored 29 points as Mangalore BC defeated Rising Star BC Mysuru to clinch the Karnataka Basketball Rural League on Saturday.
The results: Final: Mangalore BC 81 (Ashwij 29, Ganesh 19, Shailen 11) bt Rising Star BC, Mysuru 65 (Arpan 22, Amogh 16).
Third-place: Aryans BC, Mysuru 66 (Deepak 20, Shakthi 18) bt Hoysala BC, Hassan 52 (Vivek 12).

Triumphant: Mangalore BC winner of the Karnataka Basketball Rural League.

Alchemy International bags title
Alchemy International FC defeated Belgaum United FC 4-0 in the final to win the KSFA U-17 Youth Premier League title.
The result: Alchemy Intl FA 4 (Shaurya Rostigoi 35, Champhamiyum Rohen Sing 60, 64, Samphrangshai Rani 89) bt Belgaum United FC 0.

Champion: Alchemy International FC winner of the KSFA U-17 Youth Premier League.

Amarnath, ex state basketball player, passes away
Lt. Col. N. Amarnath, a former Karnataka State basketball player, passed away on Saturday.
He was 56 and was posted in Shillong.
A native of Kolar, Amarnath played for Karnataka in the 1990s and also for MEG for more than a decade. Karnataka State Basketball Association condoled his death.

BAC's swimming camp
Basavanagudi Aquatic Centre will conduct a summer camp for kids, adults and ladies from April 1.
Call 99727 37607 or 98444 62077.